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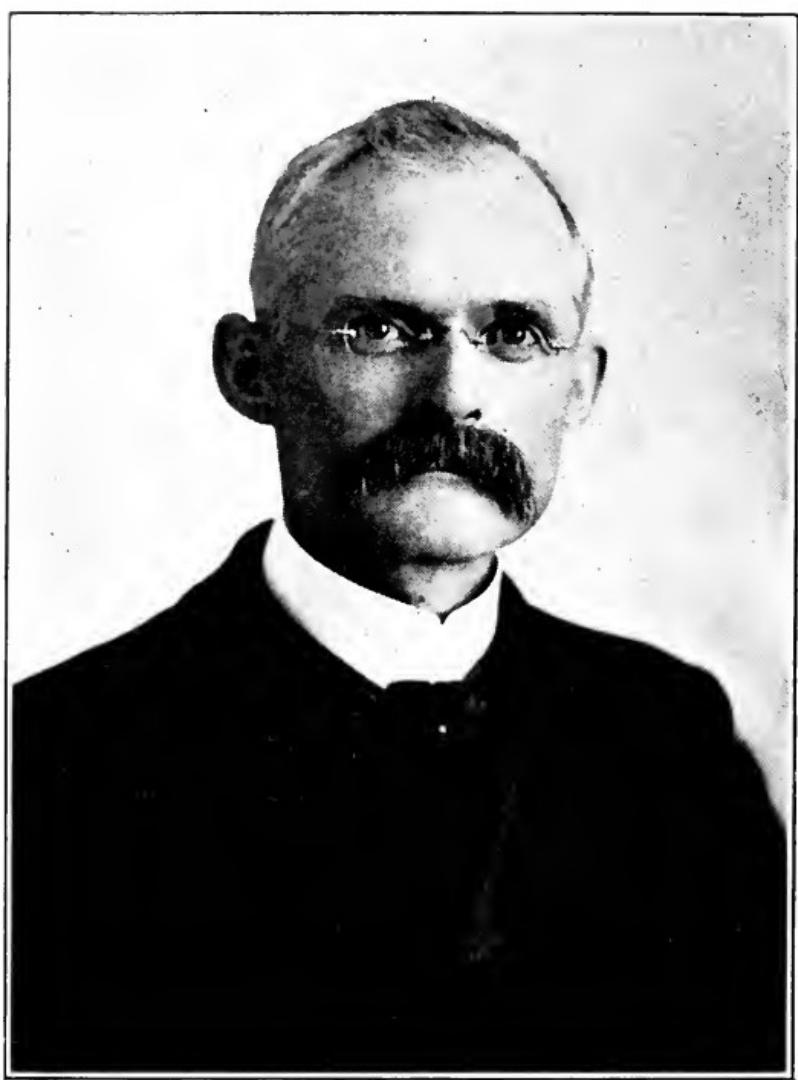
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PULPIT GLEANINGS

BY REV. GEORGE B. SHAW

PLAINFIELD, N. J.
1904

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Preface

The pastor of the Seventh-day Baptist church of Plainfield, New Jersey, ventures to submit to the public, and especially to the churches of which he has been pastor, a small volume of sermons. These discourses were not written for publication, and it seems best not to revise them as they are placed in this permanent form. The volume is simply the reproduction of sermons as they were preached, some of which have been printed in the *Seventh-day Baptist Pulpit* and in the *Sabbath Recorder*.

The author does not assume that his work is of more value than that of other men, or that he more than other pastors is an exponent of Seventh-day Baptist doctrine. Believing that a book of this kind would be of value, and finding the field entirely unoccupied, this volume is offered to your charitable consideration, in the hope that others may be induced to do similar and greater service.

G. B. S.

PLAINFIELD, N. J., August 1, 1904.

WEDDING
INVITATION
MANUAL

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I

"Also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day."—1 Chron. 11:22

ANYONE who undertakes to lead an upright Christian life is facing a lion. If he is in business, society, politics or any public place, in the opening years of the twentieth century, he has gone down into a pit. If he proposes to be loyal there to God's holy Sabbath, then it is a snowy day. "Also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day." The text is a brief report of one of three valiant deeds done by one Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, for which he was given a place of honor in the standing army of King David.

As soon as David was made king over all Israel, he began at once to organize the army and nation. He went up and took the citadel of Jebus, and there began the modern Jerusalem. He offered the place of honor and command to

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the one who should first climb the fortress and smite the enemy, and this gallant deed was done by Joab, who, from that hour to the end of David's life, was the commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel.

These were the days when individual strength and bravery counted for more than now. Gunpowder was not known, horses could not easily be secured and could not be used in the mountain country of Judea. Sometimes a mere handful of men on the top of a rock or in some narrow valley would defy a whole army, just as Horatius defended the bridge at Rome.

For these acts of strength and bravery men were promoted to the command of armies; by such daring deeds they became kings. In the chapter from which the text is taken there are about thirty-five names of the brave men who were the leaders of David's army. The first three are called "mighty men" and their deeds are told. Then there are three who are above the thirty "valiant men," but who are said not to have attained to the first three. One of this second three was Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, who was placed in command of the king's bodyguard of Cherethites and Pelethites, who afterward

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became counselor to David, and, on the removal of Joab, the commander-in-chief under Solomon.

It is recorded that the mighty deeds of individual prowess which won for Benaiah his exalted rank were three. He slew two lion-like men of Moab. He killed an Egyptian giant nine feet in height. Being unarmed, he sprang at the giant and taking from him his spear, he slew him with his own weapon.

It is also said that he slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day. The details of the story are all wanting. It may be that the lion, driven by hunger, had attacked a child at the village gate; and that Benaiah had swiftly tracked him through the snow to his den in a pit; and climbing down the slippery sides had killed him there.

The lion is the king of beasts, and the great terror to the shepherds. To kill a lion with a sword or spear or club was very difficult and required great strength and bravery. But to face one in a pit was unusual. Neither the lion, nor the man, could well run away. It was a case of "beard the lion in his den." Many men have been forced into the arena with the lion, but few have ever voluntarily gone down into the pit with one.

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The writer of the text adds as an additional evidence of Benaiah's daring deed that it was a snowy day. Snow was quite uncommon in that country, and such weather usually drove the people of Judah to the shelter of their homes. The snow would also make one's footing very uncertain on the mountain and the cold would benumb the muscles. The bottom and sides of the pit would be slippery, and the lion desperate from hunger.

The word lion is used about one hundred and fifty times in the Bible, and is most generally used to illustrate strength, fierceness, bravery or some like quality. Sometimes it is used in a good sense, as where the Messiah is called "the lion of the tribe of Judah;" sometimes in a bad sense, as where Zephaniah, complaining of the wickedness of the rulers, says "her princes within her are roaring lions." The form of the lion was prominent in ancient Jewish art and the lion also appears often in vision literature, where it represents certain qualities, "and the first beast was like a lion."

Courage is a fundamental virtue in man. It could hardly be called a high form of virtue, but it is certainly a fundamental one. There

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was never a greater need of courage than now, but the form of courage is different. Moral courage is just as real bravery as physical courage, and is a higher type of virtue. War is said by the ancients to be the mother of heroes, and so it is. It is right that we should admire physical bravery and strength as we do, and it is not altogether a survival of paganism that so many of the presidents of the United States have been generals, and yet moral courage is far above and beyond physical courage in its rank and importance.

You remember how Peter drew his sword and slashed at the head of one of those who came to arrest his master; but that when a few hours afterwards a young woman suggested that he was a follower of Christ, he denied with an oath that he had ever known him. What was true then is true now.

i. To be a Christian requires much moral courage. One of the trying things is, that public sentiment always commends physical bravery, and quite often, if not indeed generally, scoffs at moral courage. Let a fireman, in the course of his regular business duty, risk his life to save a life, and we all rightly join in his praise. Let

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some one have the courage to differ with the majority upon some moral question and see. A congressman may have as much need of courage as a general. This kind of bravery does not require that we have bone and muscle or that we belong to any age or sex or class; it does not require that we go to any place; for the opportunity to be brave will come to us. The man who deserted his young wife and joined the army that went to fight in the Philippine Islands had to go a long way for a chance to show his courage, while the wife who went out to work to keep his children out of an Illinois poor-house had the opportunity to show courage brought to her door.

The Bible teaches us that we are in a sort of fight as Christians, but that we are wrestling, not against flesh and blood, but that our enemy is one who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. That a spiritual conflict with this lion must be waged continually. To be a Christian is to learn to walk by faith and not by sight; and this requires bravery.

Susie Burdick, returning to her work in China, is a splendid example of moral courage. Peter Velthuysen going into the fever coast of

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Africa was as brave as if it had been some battle of armies. But others are tried as well as missionaries. It may be a young man or woman in Plainfield who believes that it is wrong to join in some particular form of private or public amusement. Who believes that there is little courage required to stand for principle. It may be some boy or girl who would like to acknowledge the Saviour, but who knows that the other boys and girls would make fun of them. It may be some man down in the shops who is a Christian and who ought to let it be known to the other men. It may be a student in some large school who is a member of a small denomination. It may be some traveling man to whom it is a cross to say, "I am a Christian and a Seventh-day Baptist." It may be some invalid who must bear pain—on and on and on. It may be some one who is misunderstood and abused and who must endure in silence.

To be a Christian means to be separate from the world, and it takes a brave person, in these days, to come out and be separate. But there are battles within as well as battles without the man. There is sin crowding into the heart. There are temptations to pride, to worldliness

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and to all sorts of things that are wrong. The natural tendency of man seems to be downward. But all the lions in the way cannot harm a trusting and fighting disciple of Jesus Christ. If we have on the whole armor of God we will be able to stand. With the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, with the sandals of peace and taking withal the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, we cannot be overcome.

The struggle to be a Christian is worth more than it costs, but it is a struggle. The lions along the path we tread may be chained, but they are real lions. A danger that is almost as disastrous as cowardness is carelessness. Overconfidence is as bad as underconfidence. The Christian who toys with sin, having confidence in his own strength, is prodding a sleeping lion.

II. But Benaiah not only slew a lion, but to do it he went down into a pit. I sometimes wish that it was not necessary for Christians to mingle so much with the world; or that the scheme of social order under which we live was more sane and Christian, so that it would not be necessary for us to elbow each other so. But I remember that Jesus distinctly said that he did

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not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world but rather that they should be kept from the evil.

A Christian man goes out for a week of labor. If he is in business for himself it is especially a struggle in competition. The acting principle in all is the infidel principle of the survival of the fittest, or more strictly the survival of the toughest. Jesus thought of society as an enlarged family, with God as the father of all. In a rightly organized family there may be emulation, but there cannot be competition. Competition implies the failure of some. That the weakest will perish. The ideal of Christ was that the strong should help the weak. That all should co-operate as brothers. Now how is a Christian man to do in his business life! Every year the number of employers is becoming less and the number of employees is becoming more; and between labor and capital the lines of battle are being closely drawn.

The same principles are everywhere at work, and the man or woman who would succeed in the world and follow the teachings of Jesus has gone down into the pit with the lion. It is also a fact that in our highly organized society, it is

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easy to lose the sense of individual responsibility, which makes it especially dangerous to our Christian integrity. A corporation too often has no conscience. Some months ago Dr. Parkhurst charged the denomination of which he is a member with a business act that no individual member would do. It is easy to pass on the responsibility to others and drift along with the struggling masses of men and women who are in the great industrial battle.

Do not understand me to suggest that a man cannot be in business and at the same time be a Christian. Or that one cannot be in politics and be a Christian, or that society women are not Christians. It can be done, it is being done, it must be our ideal; but go to the young men of this, or any other congregation, and ask them what effect the struggle for success in the world is having on their spiritual lives. If they are honest, they will generally say that they are down in the pit with the king of beasts.

III. But the hero of the text not only went down into the pit, but he did so under very trying circumstances on account of the cold, slippery day. So it is that there is for us Seventh-day Baptists a peculiar trial. The more complex

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society becomes the more we are obliged to depend on others and the less we can command our own time. The Christian world at large confess to a great and increasing difficulty in keeping any Sabbath. How much more so must it be for the few who, standing almost alone, are honoring God's Sabbath. The pressure is especially keen in the cities.

Rural Seventh-day Baptists, who are in a position to do as they please when Friday night comes, are usually quite out of sympathy with the Sabbath-keeping of those not so independently situated. This I do not say by way of justification of the conduct of any. Many of these criticisms are just, notwithstanding the fact that many of those who criticise would do the same things if put in the same place. The point is this, that Sabbath-keeping for many of us at least is a *snowy day*. The difficulty of keeping the Sabbath, and of keeping it properly, is greatly increased by the ever increasing disregard for Sunday. Most of our friends and associates have little regard for any particular *day*, and we know that they often think that we are way behind the times if not downright cranks for our old-fashioned notions about the

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Sabbath. If we cannot be induced to give up the Sabbath, then they say that we need not be more particular about Sabbath than they about Sunday, which practically means that we do not observe Sabbath at all. Now the Sabbath can be kept and it ought to be kept. The future of Christianity looks very dark if it is to be Sabbathless, but God in love made the Sabbath for man. Man needs the Sabbath. What ought to be done can be done. All men ought to be Christians and Sabbath-keeping Christians. This means that every one of us should be all of that.

The Christian ideal of life is a life of unselfish, loving service. If we have not attained wholly to that, we should not become discouraged, for the ideal is very high indeed; but on the other hand we must not permit ourselves to rest contented with the little progress that we have made. It ought not to be a discouragement to us to know that our Christian lives are to be lives of struggle. All life is serious business; and anything that is of value will be attained only by some struggle.

On the other hand, it is of value for us to stop to consider the fact that we will not wander

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into the kingdom of God, or drift into the kingdom of God, or be dragged into the kingdom of God. "Straight is the gate, and narrow in the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

It is common knowledge that physical strength, mental strength and moral and spiritual strength are developed by use. This does not deny the importance of principles of heredity and environment; it insists that men grow strong. When young men and young women are looking for an easy way through life they have gone out to invite failure. The fact that a thing is hard to do is not an argument that it cannot be done. The fact that a thing is not generally believed, is not a sound argument that it is not so. When the boy David, to protect the sheep that had been intrusted to his care, killed a bear

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and a lion, he was developing the qualities that enabled the young man to kill the giant of Gath who was defying the God of the armies of Israel. When Benaiah killed a lion in a pit in a snowy day he was preparing himself to snatch a spear that was like a weaver's beam from the mailed hand of the giant Egyptian. "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; each victory will help you some other to win; strive manfully onward, dark passions subdue, look ever to Jesus, he will carry you through."

Let us not doubt God nor be afraid; neither let us lie down in fancied security to be devoured. Let us recognize the great sad fact of sin. Let us recognize how wicked and subtle it is. Let us face it squarely in the strength of God. We may all have the joy of service and of victory. Our Father will stand by us in every trial. Every effort will make us stronger. Every victory will give us confidence in our leader. Every faithful effort will be crowned with true success, and will make us of use to our country and to our king.

"Also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day." "Now the parable is this: the seed is the Word of God. Those by the

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wayside are those that hear; then cometh the Devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience."

II

“ Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour : so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.”—Eccl. 10 : 1

I HARDLY know whether to be sorry or glad that the text this morning has so little attraction. In the first place it is not inviting. The theme is not invitation. It is not “come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Not, “Whosoever will may come.” Not, “Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.”

Neither is the text inspiring. The theme is not one of inspiration, as might be expected from such texts as: “Lo, I am with you always;” or “The Lord of Hosts is with us;” or “Ye are the light of the world.” More than this the text is not even instructive. The theme is not one of instruction. One could hardly hope to instruct a congregation from so homely a text or with so homely a theme. But the text is more than homely; it is positively repulsive. You may have noticed that homely people are frequently the best people; and that the best things are

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often the least inviting. In this particular many of you could be likened unto an oyster in its ragged shell; while many of us resemble rather a beautiful green persimmon. But the text this morning is not narrow or shallow or short. It has real value and is keenly suggestive, notwithstanding its homely form. You will not easily forget it. Eccl. 10: 1, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor."

The text itself needs little explanation. The meaning of the word apothecary, is one whose business it was to compound incense; or as we would say, a perfumer. The sense of smell has never been cultivated or appreciated in our western catarrhal climate, as it is in the oriental countries. Very much was made, and is still made, in the East, of the art of compounding delicate and rare perfumes.

The statement of the text is simply this, if a perfumer is compounding some very fine incense or perfume, it is not necessary for a dead sparrow or cat to get into it to spoil it, but that a few dead flies will cause the beautiful fragrance to give place to a stinking savour. Just so the

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author says it is with those who are in reputation for wisdom and honor when a little folly gets into their lives.

You will not misunderstand me I know when I say that Seventh-day Baptists are in reputation for wisdom and honor. The sifting process of our environments is such that it would not be easy to find more intelligent, loyal and cleaner congregations than those that meet on the Sabbath in our churches. It would certainly be out of place for me to stand here and harangue you about the ordinary forms of stealing and blasphemy and wife beating, drunkenness or murder.

And yet, dear friends, how often is it that in place of a sweet fragrance our lives send forth an awful stench by reason of the little flies of folly that are compounded into the make-up of our every-day experience. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." You all know how easily some garments show dirt. Now there is nothing that will show dirt so easily as a Christian character. Little defects that would hardly be thought of as moral, and

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that would not show on a man of the world, terribly disfigure a follower of the Perfect One.

It has been found that a great telescope is extremely sensitive to the least jar. The observatory must have absolute quiet. Sometimes when very careful observations are being taken it has been found that the trotting of a dray horse a block away has spoiled the whole experiment. You can see every time he puts his foot down. It is exactly so with the life of a Christian.

Why is it that so much is said about minister's sons. It is not because they are more apt to go astray than are the sons of other men, but because so much more is expected of them. I have it on the authority of Professor Thompson, a writer on social science, and on some calculations of my own, that the sons of ministers are better than the sons of any other class of men. You say that Ingersoll was a minister's son; so were John and Charles Wesley. You are thinking of some unworthy sons of Seventh-day Baptist ministers—but think also of B. C. and S. H. Davis, of Geo. W. and Clayton A. Burdick, of M. B. Kelly and others. The reason that minister's sons are in such bad repute is

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because the background of the picture is so white.

Exactly the same is true of deacons and the daughters of deacons. Why is it that some men, even outside a newspaper office, when they have a story to tell of some mean, stingy, old hypocrite, will say that it was "the deacon." It makes me indignant, whether it is in some popular novel or from some common grocery-store loafer. If there is any reason for this, aside from the promptings of the evil one, it is because when a deacon is found of this exceptional character, he stands in so remarkable contrast to the splendid body of men that we know as deacons. They are not perfect, and the best care has not always been shown in their selection, but in general they are the best men and we ought to exalt the office and defend it against slander. But I am getting away from my theme.

These flies are as numerous as their Egyptian prototype. We could not count them. Like the iniquities of the Psalmist they are more than the hairs of our heads. There is impatience, rudeness, selfishness, indolence, parsimony, egotism, gossip, pride, backbiting, temper uncontrolled, sensitiveness, unforgive-

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ness, carelessness about the Sabbath, love of praise or of gold or of pleasure or of ease—but you know all about them. You have seen some of them in yourselves and all of them in others. These follies spoil our lives in at least two ways: 1. They mar the character. 2. They destroy our usefulness.

Among all the grains of sand on all the shores of all the seas there is not one that is perfectly round. If one is found that seems to be so it is sure to be small and when placed under a microscope all sorts of defects are at once seen. Many are nearly round, but all have their flat places. So it seems to me to be with human lives. There is none that is perfectly round; and if one is found that seems so, put it under the eye of God and who shall stand! We all have our flat places and some even have edges and corners. The ideal is perfect, but the real of our lives is imperfect and will doubtless always be. A young man, now a prominent Seventh-day Baptist, was once giving an oration at Milton College. His subject was, "The Real and the Ideal." In the midst of one of his choicest flights of eloquence he forgot himself, or more likely he thought of himself, and broke

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down completely. As he fished about in his pocket for his manuscript he coolly remarked that this was a part of the real and not the ideal.

So it is that while we aim at the ideal we find ourselves constantly face to face with the real in life. Oh, the little foxes that spoil the vines, that creep through the hedges unawares and often do more damage than the large ones would do! One is indolent, let us say lazy. Another is parsimonious, shall we call it stingy? Each can see the mote in his brother's eye and would gladly lend a hand in getting it out. Both are good men, honest men, Christian men. A third, who is neither lazy nor stingy, may not have charity for these, and his flat spot is the want of charity, of Christian love. One is rude and thoughtless of the feelings of others. X is headstrong, Y is ambitious, Z is sulky. Another is proud—proud of appearance, of attainments or of family, or possibly proud that you are not proud. There is such a thing as a proper pride and there is a pride which exalteth itself unto heaven but which shall be brought down to hell. Some of us talk too much, and some of us do not talk enough. Some of us think and talk too much about ourselves; and some of us think and

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talk too much about other people. Why, friends, if scolding and speaking unkindly of others would show on one's nose as drinking rum does, don't you think there would be many more veils worn than there are now; and if our wicked and impure thoughts were to be printed on our doors and fences, don't you think there would be places marked "for sale" or "to let" before many days.

Yes, we who are in reputation for wisdom and honor, who would shudder at the thought of any outbreaking sin, sometimes fairly swarm with the hateful flies that make lives so odious. Are any impatient and fretful, do we like to have our own way too well, and so with all the little things that mar the good life and blacken the pure white of a Christian character. These things which I say are not personal. I repeat it, they are not personal; and yet they are intended for you, for you who are in reputation for wisdom and honor. For you who are so loyal and brave and clean.

Take for example the matter of the Sabbath. Our knowledge of the Sabbath demands its observance. Our claims for the day and our willingness to sacrifice for the principle, make it

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doubly necessary for us to be careful how we keep the Sabbath. We who stand so loyally against great arguments and against great odds, must beware lest the little flies of carelessness get in on Friday night or on Sabbath afternoon and cause the fragrance of the Sabbath incense to be rather a stench that will repel men, and that will dishonor God. Seventh-day Baptist clothes show dirt very easily and we can not be too careful.

So it is with every weakness and every sin. God will hold us responsible not only for giving battle to the great sins, but also for fighting the little follies. “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.”

These little follies not only mar character but they also destroy our usefulness. We are all ambitious to be useful. You have often thought of this as you have listened to the testimonies in prayer-meeting, especially in young people’s meeting. We all want to be useful. Now the greatest drawback to usefulness is a bad smelling life. Oh the hateful flies of folly. If we

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could only be rid of them. They hinder us in a number of ways.

In the first place they break our own spirit. One who is conscious of these little defects of character will naturally shrink from Christian work. Here the disciple must make his stand. I am ready to grant that there may be those of such malodorous lives that the less they try to do the better; but they are rare cases and they are not here this morning. Every one of us ought to be workers in the cause of Christ. We mean to be workers; but the consciousness of the little follies often shuts our mouths when they should be filled with praise and testimony. It holds us back from personal work, and keeps saying to us that it would be better if we were to mind our own business. It robs many a Christian of his strength, and keeps many soldiers of the cross lying flat in the trenches.

But assuming that one has been able to overcome this serious handicap and stands ready for personal, aggressive, Christian work, he still finds himself hindered on every hand by the contemptible little sins that we hate, yet hug to our bosoms. It may be that a pastor is unfortunate in his home relations—where is his use-

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fulness! It may be that an evangelist is exacting about his pay—where is his usefulness! It may be that a teacher does not control his temper—where is his usefulness! Is a husband unkind or selfish? Is a mother impatient and scolds? All are good people, in reputation for wisdom and honor. A young man is conceited, a young woman is vain; they want to do the work of Christ in the church; they ought to do it, but they are hobbled and hand-cuffed and blindfolded. Of course we should not look to men for examples but we do. We point men to Christ, but they will point back to us. We cannot avoid the fact that we are ambassadors and so representatives of the Kingdom of God. I would be glad if ministers did not have to stand as targets for everybody's criticism; but things will have to change a good deal before they get off as easily as most mortals.

Why, friends, the world finds no fault with Christianity, but has plenty to say against the lives of those who profess to exemplify it. Not long ago the speaker attended the examination and ordination of a young man to the Seventh-day Baptist ministry. Supposing, for an example, that he had said that he was accustomed

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to dance and play cards and use tobacco and a trifle of strong drink; and that he attended the theatre frequently. That he only lost his temper on serious provocation. That he forgave his enemies when restitution was made. That he kept the Sabbath whenever convenient, etc. You know what the result would have been. No ordination. Flies—few enough and little enough—but enough to spoil the fragrance. We do not expect much from a phosphate factory or a fish market by way of incense, but from the church of Jesus Christ much is expected. This congregation is exceptionally clean and good—you are in reputation for wisdom and honor; but all this only increases the demand for clean, honest, loving Christian living.

In view of this very homely text you will pardon a very homely illustration. Years ago I remember that father discovered that a skunk was spending his days under the kitchen and his nights in the henhouse. Immediately a council of war was held and plans laid. Naturally we did not care to have any unnecessary trouble with the stranger. But something had to be done. We tried to induce him to withdraw. We tried to smoke him out. We tried to starve

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him out. At last we were compelled to engage him in a short, sharp battle that resulted in victory for us. In the meantime we paid no attention to the mites and lice that infested the henhouse. May it not be that this will illustrate what sometimes happens in men's lives. We would shudder at the thought of harboring any great repulsive sin, when we neglect the swarm of little things that destroys in our lives that which is fragrant and pure and sweet and clean.

Now we do not call attention to these unpleasant things merely for the sake of calling attention to them, but in the hope that we may be able to get rid of them. The first step in the right direction is to recognize that we have faults, not merely in general terms, but specific flies that spoil our lives. It may be helpful in locating some of these to remember that public opinion is quite apt to be right in its conclusions about us. It is, of course, liable to mistake and may misjudge us, but if we find out that people have an idea that we have a flat spot somewhere it is certainly worth while to see if it is so. It will not make the matter any better for us to refuse to look ourselves over. If these thoughts

Little Foxes that Spoil the Vines

only call attention to the faults of others then our time this morning has been far worse than wasted. "Let each one of us not think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly, according as God has given to each the measure of faith."

As Sabbath-keeping disciples of Jesus Christ we make for ourselves a high ideal, so that little inconsistencies (?) of Sabbath-keeping, little "mole-hills" of selfishness, become mountains in the eyes of others and to us stepping-stones away from a spiritual life. And you who condemn the Sabbath-breaker and the selfish one—you look out for your "flat spot." "If thy right hand cause thee to stumble, pluck it off; if thy right eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee." These are not idle words. They mean cut off and pluck out and cast from thee. Shall I finish the sentence, "for it is better to enter into life maimed than having two eyes or two hands to be cast into hell."

Many of these hateful flies that poison our lives are intrenched in habit. Practically the only way to break up some habits is by the formation of other ones. Good resolutions are all right but good habits are better. Good habits

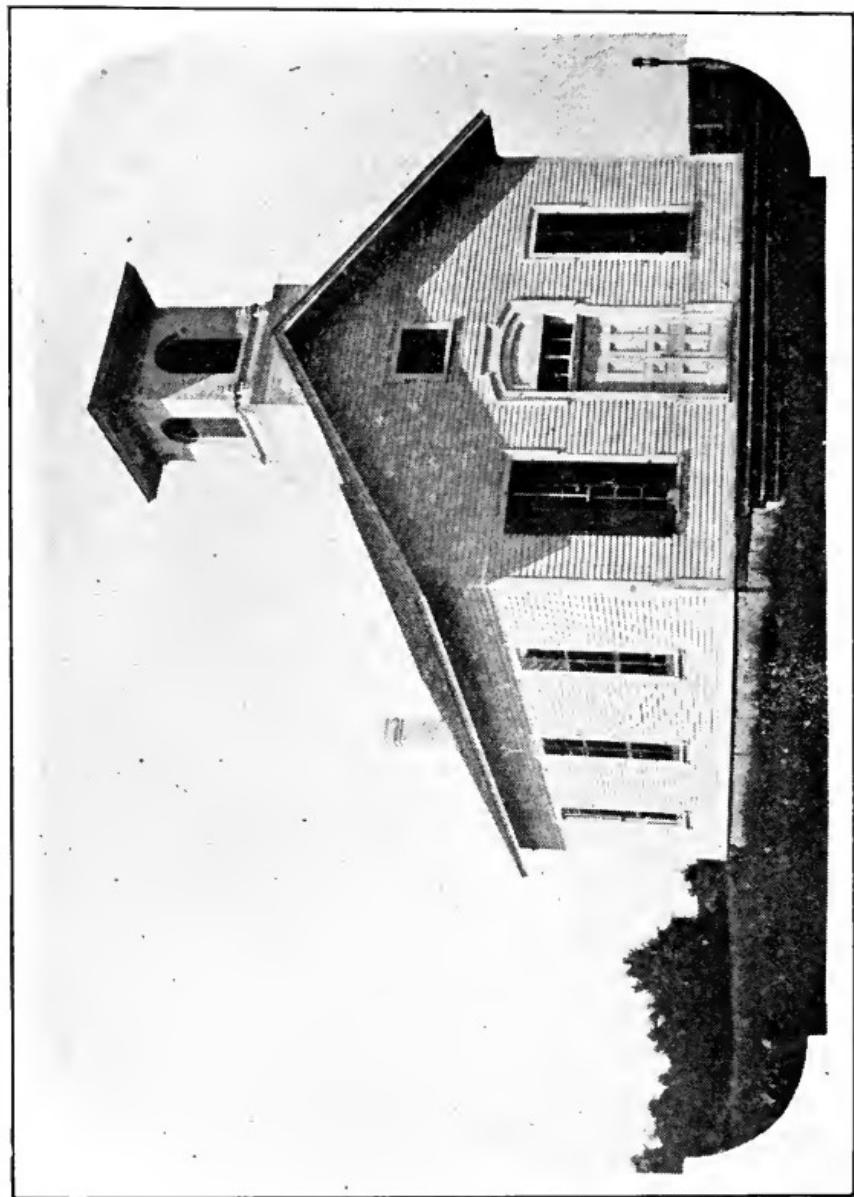
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make the doing of good easy. Bad habits can not be frightened away as you would a skylark; but they stay by like little English sparrows. We will find that the little things that come in to spoil the fragrance of our Christian lives will require heroic treatment.

You will not easily forget the text. Do not apply it to any but yourselves. Let us not grieve the Saviour by the little progress we make toward him. Let us also remember that we must not try in our own strength to sweeten the fragrance of our lives. The Saviour wants us all to be pure and sweet and clean as well as strong and brave and noble, and he has promised to help us in our efforts.

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ROCK RIVER (WIS.) CHURCH

III

"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you."—Acts 2 : 38

I OFFER no excuse to-day for a sermon on the subject of baptism. Not even the fact that I am preparing a lesson on the subject for the *Helping Hand*. The preaching of doctrine is not easy, nor popular in these days, when men so often ask for an easy sort of gospel, that has no difference between Christians, and little difference between Christians and men of the world. Doctrine rightly understood can not be preached too much. Doctrinal preaching is the presentation of the truth about the relation of God to man, and of man to man. If this teaching is based upon the Bible and enforced from the Bible, it ought to be welcomed by all men. A discussion of the relations of man to man is usually thought of as "practical," but it is clear that a statement of my relation to God is also practical.

The proper basis of right feeling is right thinking. The only true foundation for a religious experience is truth. Whoever shrinks from knowing the truth taught in the Bible does

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so at great loss. Doctrinal preaching is unpopular because so often we magnify the thoughts and theories of men to the neglect of the words of God. Let us see if the statements of Scripture about baptism can not be made so clear as not to arouse opposition, and so brief as not to incite slumber.

I. Baptism is a Christian ordinance. 1. This is shown by the words of the great Head of the church, (Matt. 28: 19) "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." And also where he says, (Mark 16: 16) "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved." These and other passages show that Jesus gave the church baptism as a Christian ordinance.

2. The same truth is also taught by the injunctions of the apostles, (Acts 2: 38) "And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you."

3. A third evidence of the fact that baptism is a Christian ordinance is found in the statements of the apostles that the New Testament church was made up of baptized believers, (Rom. 6: 3-5; Col. 2: 11, 12) where Paul re-

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fers to the church as made up of those who had been baptized, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death."

4. But besides these scriptural proofs we have the evidence of all subsequent history that baptism in some form has been practiced in the church. I know of no body of Christians, beside the Quakers, that do not have the ordinance of baptism.

II. Let us now notice whether or not this ordinance is a universal and perpetual obligation, that is, a duty for *every one, everywhere, always*.

1. Hear again the words of Jesus in the great commission, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This looks like a universal and perpetual obligation.

2. The same truth is shown in the fact that Jesus himself submitted to baptism at the hands of John saying, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," (Matt. 3: 13-17).

3. We read that Jesus made and baptized

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more disciples than John, but that the baptizing was done by the hand of the disciples.

4. Attention should also be called to the fact that there is in the Bible not so much as a shadow of a hint that there is to be any repeal or limitation in the application of the duty of baptism. What Jesus said to his apostles; what Peter said to the anxious throng at the day of Pentecost; that God says to you to-day, through this text, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

III. Right here the question will naturally arise, What is the proper mode of baptism? This again divides itself into two questions, What was the original mode? Are we at liberty to change the form?

Almost without exception scholars now agree that the original mode of baptism was by immersion. Neander and Stanley among historians, and a long list of modern scholars from every denomination, concede the fact that New Testament baptism was immersion. They hold that the church for expedience may change the form of baptism, as it did the day of rest.

I. That immersion was the original form of baptism is shown from the Greek word *bap-*

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tise, which is simply transferred to the English, because a word could not be found that would satisfy the church. The word means "dip" in or under water. Every use of the word in the New Testament would admit of this meaning, and several would seem to require it.

2. The connection in which the word is often used is also suggestive. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan (Mk 1: 9) and he "came *up out of* the water (Mk 1: 10). We also read that John was once baptizing at Aenon "because there was much water there" (John 3: 23). In the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip (Acts 8: 38, 39), it is said that they both went *down into* the water and that they came *up out of the* water.

These and other passages show beyond question that baptism was *in* the water. They do not say that the candidate was placed entirely under the water. This, however, seems evident from the symbolism used.

3. Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we are *buried* with him by baptism into death." Col. 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him." Conybear and Howson say that such expressions can not be understood, except

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in view of the fact that the baptism of which the apostle was speaking was by immersion.

4. To these Scripture arguments could be added the statements of church history, the practice of the Greek church, which includes all Russia, and the silent witness of many an ancient ruined church, where, to this day, can be seen the old marble baptisteries where baptisms were, to say the least, in large quantities of water. It is not difficult to trace the introduction of other forms of baptism which came into the church with the heathen notion that men were saved by baptism.

The second part of this question is, Whether or not men are at liberty to change the method of administering the ordinance. This is a large subject and should be treated by itself. It is enough to say that Seventh-day Baptists believe that the church is administrative and not legislative. The church does not make laws for itself, but administers the laws of God. If we put the church above the Bible, then we must go all the way to Rome. If we deny such authority to the church, but give it to convenience then we make expedience our God and defy Jehovah.

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The original form is beautiful and suggestive. It fulfills all the symbolisms of burial, and washing, and being raised to a new, clean life, and above all it is the form in which Jesus was baptised and which the early church used in obedience to his command. Why not walk in this way?

IV. What now is the meaning of baptism? What does it symbolize? The central truth that is set forth in baptism has to do with the relation of the death and resurrection of Christ to our own death and resurrection, both material and spiritual. We die to sin and are buried with Christ (Rom. 6: 4). We are raised with him to a new life. Here is the symbol of the putting off of sin through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Baptism is also the sign of the change within (Gal. 3: 27). "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ." Our baptism points to the death and resurrection of Christ, and to our acceptance of the same and the passage of the old life and the profession of the new life in Christ.

Thus it is seen that as the symbol of the new birth baptism should not be repeated. The Lord's supper should be repeated often, for that

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symbolizes the continual union of which regeneration is the beginning.

V. This naturally brings us to the question of who are proper subjects for baptism. The answer is suggested by what has already been said. The proper subjects for baptism are all those who give credible evidence of having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that is, those who have entered that relation to the Saviour which baptism symbolizes. God will look after the mysteries of the new birth. It is man's place to repent of sin and accept the death of Christ, thus dying to sin. There is no Christian duty that comes before this, in its logical order, as saith the text, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

From the nature of the case, there must be some judge of the credibility of the evidence of regeneration. This responsibility the church has. Either directly or through its ministers it decides who are the proper subjects for baptism. It is also in the nature of the case that there must be an administrator, one who administers the ordinance, but our view of baptism will lead us to the fact that the real act, the important act, is the act of the one baptized. When a man

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asks for baptism and puts himself before God and the world in the position of one being baptized, it might almost be said that he is baptizing himself.

In speaking of the proper subjects of baptism, I have not referred to questions of age and knowledge and life because no hard and fast rule can be laid down in these cases. Rev. S. H. Davis was baptized at the age of seven. Rev. W. L. Burdick at ten. But this does not mean that all children of this age who may ask for baptism are proper subjects for this most impressive and important Christian ordinance. This much is becoming more and more evident, that boys and girls are fit subjects for baptism at a much earlier age than many have supposed.

What, now, is necessary by way of knowledge. Theologically speaking, very little. In this Christian land, where the Bible is in every home, it would be difficult to find a child who did not have more knowledge than was possessed by the Ethiopian whom Philip baptized down on the road to Gaza (Acts 8: 37); or that jailor at Phillipi that Paul baptized (Acts 7: 30-33). It is not usually a question of intellectual knowledge, so much as a matter of the surrender of

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the will in loving obedience. It is only necessary to repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

By way of review, let us look back over the way we have come this morning. Baptism is a Christian ordinance, as shown by the words of Jesus, by the teaching of the apostles, by the composition of the New Testament church, and by the uniform practice of the church in all ages.

Baptism is also seen to be of perpetual and universal obligation, from the wording of Christ's great commission to his disciples, from his example "to fulfill all righteousness," from the uniform practice of the apostles, for the entire absence of any limitation in the direct command of Christ and his followers to baptize every one, everywhere, to the end of the world.

The proper mode of baptism has been seen to be immersion, as shown by the meaning of the word baptize, from the connection in which the word is used, from the prepositions with which the word is usually introduced, and by the generally acknowledged practice of the early church. We have seen that baptism symbolizes our acceptance of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the acknowl-

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edgment of the same for our personal salvation. We have seen that proper subjects of baptism are all who give evidence of regeneration. In this connection attention was called to the fact that regeneration is a matter that God will attend to for all who repent of sin and look in faith to Christ for salvation.

We are now ready for a definition of baptism: Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a token of his regeneration through union with Christ.

The application of this subject to this congregation will naturally divide itself into two parts, to those who have been and to those who have not been baptized.

First to those who have never submitted themselves to God in this beautiful ordinance. Hear again the text, Acts 2: 38, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you." Here is a plain duty for every person who has reached the years of understanding. The only thing that logically precedes baptism as a Christian duty is the preparation for it. You may say, "I am not fit for baptism," but you ought to be fit for it. And what is fitness, but repentance of sins and faith toward God. Do you believe in God? Do you

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believe in his Son, Our Lord? Do you repent of past sin and promise God that in the future you will trust and obey Christ? Then you are a Christian, and your first duty is to acknowledge it in baptism. You are old enough, you know enough, our Father is waiting to bless you, only your will is in the way. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It is not a question of worthiness, but of willingness. It is not a question of what one may not do and be saved, but of what Jesus did and commanded to be done. It may be that many will be accepted without baptism and it may be that many will be lost because they stumbled at the plain command to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters who may never have professed Christ, or who may never have possessed Christ, listen but once more to the words of the inspired apostle, "Repent and be baptized every

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one of you.” Will you do it? Will you say, “I won’t” to your Father? To your Father in Heaven! May God help you not to do that.

And now, what of the application of this subject to the great mass of baptized Christians present. Baptism marks the putting off of the old life and the putting on of the new. We are to live no longer in the carnal, sinful life, but in the spiritual life. Shall not the memory of our own baptism to-day warm our hearts and strengthen our faltering wills to cast out the old bad life and renew our allegiance to the Saviour. You remember how they sang, “Oh happy day that fixed my choice, on thee my Saviour and my God. Well may this glowing heart rejoice, and tell its raptures all abroad. Happy day, happy day, that Jesus washed my sins away.”

Did you ever think that the third commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” applies to many things besides what we call profanity. In baptism we take the name of the Lord our God. We are adopted into the family of the Almighty. We become children of the Heavenly Father. Sometimes some of us do not honor his name. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God

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in vain." The world is looking to us for the evidence of our new life. The church looks to us for needed spiritual help. The Saviour looks to us as those who have promised to show in our daily walk his spirit and life. Our Father in Heaven looks to us as the children of his boundless love and pleads with us to cast out all of the old life and to know the great joy of the fullness of Christ. God's forgiving love is great beyond our thought, but in his justice he has said that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

May the grace of God rest upon us all who are examples to the children and to the unconverted that we may walk worthily of the vocation wherewith we are called in Christ Jesus.

IV

"Christ liveth in me."—Gal. 2:20

I HAVE not been asked to tell the church what its duty to its new pastor is; neither am I to give to the candidate for ordination a charge. It would not be in place for me to preach to you of the preparation and qualifications for the work of the ministry, as I would to a class of theological students. It would not be right to raise questions of fitness of one who has been so recently examined and adjudged worthy and prepared for the Gospel ministry. In fact, my knowledge of what is expected in an ordination sermon is mostly of the negative order, and consists of knowing what ought not to be said. The only suggestion that came with the invitation to occupy this place was that the sermon ought to be short. I never remember having received such a limitation before, and it urges me to take the shortest path across the fields, not pausing to pick flowers, and saluting no man by the way.

Within the past few years much has been said in the religious papers about the decline in the

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supply of students for the ministry. The secular press has also commented on the apparent indifference of the brighter young men of these years to the work of the Christian ministry. It has been said that the same influences have reached our ranks, and that Seventh-day Baptist young men were turning away from this highest calling. Attention has been called to the fact that ordinations have become rare occurrences with us, and that Bro. Loofboro is the only Seventh-day Baptist who has graduated from a theological school in the past seven years. We are told that the men who do enter the ministry are mostly from the small churches of the West. Many reasons are assigned for this condition of affairs, but the most common and probably the true reason is the general decline in spirituality. Some are bold enough to say that our larger and more wealthy churches are worldly and unspiritual, and that the standard of religious life is low. They tell us that from Rhode Island to California our so-called strong churches are in reality our weak churches; that the spiritual life of a church is almost sure to be in inverse proportion to the salary that is paid its pastor. Do not understand me to say that these things are so, or that

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they are not so. It is true that they are said, and that often by our most able and best informed men. The Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society makes no secret of his opinion, based on observation, that our bright young men, especially in our larger churches, and especially in our Eastern churches, are most generally not spiritual, and that quite often the fault lies in the spiritual atmosphere of the home and the church. I have not called attention to these unpleasant things for the purpose of denying them, nor yet of pleading guilty to the charge. But the indictment brought against pastors and people is most serious, and demands attention. To-morrow morning Bro. Loofboro will wake to find himself the ordained minister of Jesus Christ, who is in charge of the important church which is not only the keystone of the Eastern Association, but is also the working center of many denominational enterprises of importance. The measure of success which this man will have—the measure of success which this church has in store for itself—will depend, not so much on education, not so much on money or numbers or organization, as upon that quality of heart and life which is suggested by the text

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which I am about to announce, Gal. 2: 20,
“Christ liveth in me.”

I shall assume to-day, what comes near the fact, that those who hear me are Christians. If you are not followers of Christ then you ought to be, and possibly hope and expect to be. It will also be assumed that we are all sorry for our weakness and sin, and that we would be glad to be better. This is saying that we wish to be more spiritual. This brings us to a very large subject, which will be briefly outlined in three sections.

- I. *What is spirituality?*
- II. *What are the results of spirituality?*
- III. *How is spirituality attained?*

In each one of these divisions there is material for a volume, and the very superficial way in which it is necessary for them to be treated to-day is as unsatisfactory to the speaker as it could well be to any hearer. The subject will also be treated from a practical rather than from a theological point of view. Not that theology is unimportant, but it does not seem best to pause in the practical discussion of a subject to split all the theological hairs that are found. For example, from the text, “Christ liveth in me,” we

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do not propose to try to show where, in the spiritual life, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ ends and the work of the Holy Spirit begins.

I. What is spirituality?

What is it to be spiritual? To be spiritually minded? We read in the Scriptures of spiritual gifts, spiritual life, spiritual blessing, spiritual sacrifices, spiritual songs, and many such expressions. What do we mean when in these days we speak of one person living on a different plane of spiritual life from another?

First of all let us notice that this spiritual life is a new life that begins at conversion. It is something that the unregenerate person never has, and never understands. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Language could not well be clearer than these words of the Lord Jesus. We must not confuse the manifestations of the Spirit with the fact of having been

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born of the Spirit. Neither should we confound the babe in Christ with the full-grown man.

Equally disastrous and disappointing will be an effort to comprehend in all its details this truth that the Saviour implied was not to be comprehended by the human mind. We can not understand the mystery of the origin of our own life. Why then should we stumble because we do not understand all about the origin of the spiritual life. The important truth is that God gives us upon simple conditions this new life.

The conditions are repentance and faith in Christ. If you have honestly repented of your sins and looked in faith to Christ for salvation, then you may have the assurance that you have the new spiritual life within you. This, I believe, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. When Peter on the day of Pentecost was full of the Holy Spirit, he said to the anxious multitude inquiring what they should do to be saved, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Many who magnify the experience of the apostles in relation to the Holy Spirit often ignore the same apostles' teaching concerning Him. You

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who have been born of the spirit have the Holy Spirit.

A second thought of importance in regard to the life of the spirit is that it does not seem to be the plan of God to entirely remove the old life. So it is that we live in a sort of duel life in which the carnal mind and the spiritual life are waging a continual warfare for the mastery. Paul and Peter and, I suppose, every apostle and martyr and saint has had the same struggle. Where the natural man is crucified, there Christ comes, and there are abounding manifestations of the perseverance of the Holy Spirit. Where the selfish, carnal man is allowed to rise within us, there is little of the consciousness of the abiding Christ, and barrenness of manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Spirituality is a varying quantity according as Christ reigns within us—varying all the way from the riches of Christ in glory to the barrenness of the very edge of eternal ruin. The most spiritual are those who are living most completely the new Christ-life and who have most nearly crucified the selfish, natural life with its desires. Those are not necessarily most spiritual who are most emotional. Those are certainly not most spiritual who are least practical. The

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most spiritual are those who have experienced in the greatest degree the continual influence of the new life so clearly suggested in this beautiful text—"Christ liveth in me." As an explanation of the Apostle's words, listen to their context: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." When we speak of the spiritual life of a church we simply mean the average attainment in spiritual things of its members. We ought not to say that some are spiritual and that some are not, but say rather that some are more spiritual than others. Even in this case we should be careful how we make ourselves the judges, for He who is the Judge of all knows that every one of us is living a more or less unspiritual life, often far below the duty and privilege of those who are the sons of God.

The future of this church which is so dear to me, the future of my friend, its pastor, will depend, like my own future, on the degree in which we reach the spirit of the unselfish, martyr apostle, who, more and more as he gained the victory, could say, "Christ liveth in me." Take this to

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yourselves to-day,—“the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and who gave himself for me.” “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”

II. What are the results of a spiritual life?

If we are branches of a vine, which is Christ, the fruit we bear will be Christ-fruit,—to the glory of God the Father,—so shall ye be my disciples. If Christ liveth in me, then the fruit of my life will be in the reproduction of his Spirit and life. If, on the other hand, the old selfish life is permitted to obtain the predominance, then the fruit of my life will be as distinctively the works of the Devil.

In the same letter from which the text is taken Paul calls the attention of his readers to these two conflicting life principles and to the results in human action. He speaks of the works of the flesh and of the fruits of the Spirit. It is with the fruits of the Spirit that we are now especially interested, but for purposes of contrast I shall read the whole section, and shall use the exact words of Scripture, because those chosen to express the works of the flesh will not permit of

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paraphrase and those chosen to represent the fruits of the Spirit can not well be improved upon. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."

I remember having heard a man undertake to preach a series of sermons on the fruits of the Spirit. The series was never finished. I heard love, joy and peace; but the subject is too large for a series to be given in any detail. In the same chapter from which we have quoted at such length, Paul presents the same truth in a different and more concise form: "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,—but faith which worketh by love." We are saved by faith; but faith which worketh by love. The fruit of the Spirit toward God is a faith that includes joy, peace and a con-

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fident trust that is boundless. The fruit of the Spirit toward others will be shown in a love that will include gentleness, longsuffering and an unselfish goodness without stint or limit. The fruit of the Spirit within us will be that temperance which is entire self-control together with perfect meekness. In the same connection Paul gives an example of his thought when he says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." The secret of good fruitbearing is in having the branch in constant, vital connection with the good vine. The secret of a pure stream is in its pure source. There would be no possibility of doubt or question about our bearing an abundance of the very best fruit if it could be true of us as it was with the apostle who exclaimed with such joyful confidence,—"Christ liveth in me."

III. We have now reached the third and possibly the most important part of our subject. How is spirituality attained?

In the first place it will be well to remember that this blessing may not come instantly or soon

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and that it will not come to those who do not desire it. If you do not wish to live the higher life, God will let you continue to live the lower one. The Saviour says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." When men begin to feel the barrenness of their lives in spiritual experiences, they are becoming prepared for the fuller indwelling of the divine life. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God." In thinking of this subject it is also well to reconsider for a moment what has been said about the origin of the spiritual life of man. This new life is the free gift of God on the simple conditions of repentance of sins and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. As John says: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The question now arises, how is this new life to be strengthened and expanded until it shall be a life in which Christ reigns and where the Holy Spirit has supreme control. We must be on our guard against being satisfied with birth.

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Listen to what Paul says to the church at Corinth, "And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." In looking for the key that will unlock the door to the condition of heart and life where Christ dwells in us in his fullness, may we not expect that it will be found in our own possession? It seems to me that the key is in absolute and complete life-surrender. The conditions of the coming of the Holy Spirit are sin-surrender and faith. The conditions of the fullness of the Holy Spirit are life-surrender and trust. It is a great thing and not often or easily attained, to completely give up the life to Christ. In the degree that this is accomplished will we experience the blessing of the indwelling Spirit. Are you afraid to trust all to Him? Is there anything that you wish to keep back? Will you yield yourselves to God? Often it is that men will pray and plead and agonize with God for the very blessing that he has long waited to give those who would yield themselves to him. God wants every Christian to bring and lay at his feet all plans and purposes and hopes of life. This is the gateway for each of us to the life of the fullness of Spirit.

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Beyond surrender there will be service, but surrender comes first. The more nearly complete this surrender is the more we will know of the fullness of the divine presence; and the more abundant and rich will the fruits of the Spirit be. "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." The manifestations of the Spirit may come suddenly or they may be deferred; the enlightenment of our minds may be in a moment or by degrees; growth in grace and in knowledge will be growth; but just in the degree that Christians surrender to Christ in trust and obedience, will they experience that blessed union with the Lord that is referred to in the text, "Christ liveth in me."

You do not need to be told that each one of us, whatever our position in the church may be, is responsible for his own lack of spirituality; and that each one is responsible to a degree for the spiritual life of the church of which he is a

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part. If Christ is not in us it is because we do not fully open our hearts to him. Trust and obedience are one and inseparable. When a man commits everything to the Lord Jesus Christ, he will trust him implicitly and will obey in every detail without question. Then will burst forth in all their richness the fruits of the Spirit.

“When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his word,
 What a glory he sheds on our way.
While we do his good will, he abides with us still,
 And with all who will trust and obey.

“Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
 But his smile quickly drives it away.
Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear
 Can abide while we trust and obey.

“Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
 But our toil he doth richly repay.
Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross,
 But is blessed if we trust and obey.

“But we never can prove the delights of his love
 Until all on the altar we lay.
For the favor he shows, and the joy he bestows,
 Are for all who will trust and obey.

“Then trust and obey, for there is no other way,
To be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.”

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"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is *life and peace.*"

V

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”—Heb. 2: 1

THE text today is Heb. 2:1, and for reasons that will be evident I shall give it in the seven most important English versions, beginning with the Revised Version and passing backwards to Wycliffe’s translation of 1380.

Heb. 2: 1, Revised Version.—“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.”

The Common or Authorized Version of 1611.—“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

Rheims Bible of 1582.—“Therefore more abundantly ought we to observe those things which we have heard, lest perchance we run out.”

The Genevan Bible of 1557.—“Therefore we ought to diligently give heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should not keep them.”

Cranmer’s Translation of 1539.—“Therefore

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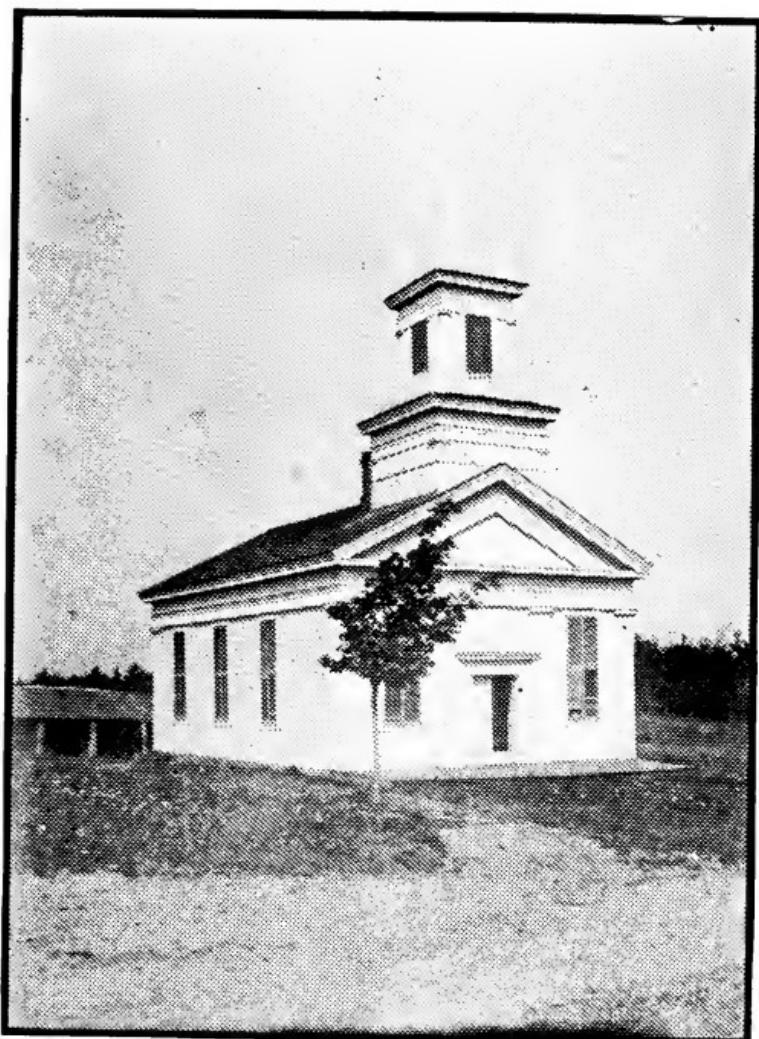
we ought to give the more heed to the things that are spoken unto us, lest at any time we perish."

Tyndale, 1534.—"Wherefore we ought to give the more heed to the things we have heard, lest we perish."

Wycliffe, 1380.—"Therefore more plenteuousli it bihoueth us to keep tho thingis that we have herd, leest paroueventure we fleten aweie."

It is evident from the variety of renderings of the last part of this text that the original must be either figurative or ambiguous, and in fact, it is both.

Notice again, as I repeat the clause in question, "Drift away from them" was the best light that the revisers could give. "Let them slip," of the Common Version, may be the same meaning, but the form is quite different and the figure is the exact opposite. One says, "Letting them slip from us," and the other, that we are "drifting away from them." The Rheims Bible, which was the third quoted, translates the same term as "Lest we run out," the figure being of the loss of water from a leaky vessel. We ought to be careful of what we have heard, lest it leak out, or we leak out. This reading you will find in the



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margin of your King James' Bible. The Geneva translation, "Lest we should not keep them," is evidently an interpretation; the difficulty of giving an accurate rendering of the Greek word is avoided by making an interpretation rather than a translation. Both Cranmer and Tyndale give an entirely different meaning when they say, "Lest we perish." Last of all, we have the translation of Wiccliffe, "Lest we flee away." This you observe is very like the Revised Version, "Lest we drift away from them."

The Greek word is certainly capable of several meanings. It may mean stumble or fall, hence Cranmer and Tyndale say: "Lest we perish." It may also mean to run out of the mind, as liquid from a leaky vessel—hence to forget. It may also mean slip or flow or drift.

I do not profess to be a scholar in English, much less in Greek, and I will not venture a translation; but will suggest that the author may have had in mind something like this, which of course is not a translation, unless the mind and life be held closely to the words which God had spoken, we will drift away from them and from the salvation which they promise. Thus the thought in

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the author's mind, and the thought which I wish you to keep in mind to-day is, "The danger of a drifting soul." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them."

Those who deliberately renounce their divine hope are very few—very few indeed; but those made shipwreck of their faith by gradually—very gradually—getting farther and farther away, these are very many.

The book of Hebrews was written to those who had heard the words of God in the call of salvation, but who were in danger of drifting away from them. I am not speaking to those who have heard the Word, who have responded to the Saviour's voice when it said, "Follow me," but to those who, with all the church, are in danger of drifting away. The Christian who is in open conflict with evil is in little danger. With all the armor on for his defense, and with the "sword of the Spirit" in his hand, he is following the conquering leader—crowding close to Immanuel's banner.

So it is that the sea of life may be very tempestuous—the waves high and the winds contrary. Storms may rage about the Christian

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ships, but rocks and shoals and waves have no terror when Jesus is at the helm and on the wave, and when the anchor of hope is already fastened within the vale. The real danger comes when we lie down in fancied security without anchor or purpose, and drift. A drifting soul is in perpetual danger of eternal loss.

How did the church become so far removed from the pure truth of New Testament Christianity? It drifted away. How do young men and women in Plainfield get from the church of Christ into the world? How do older men and women lose their hold upon God and upon his truth? By not following the injunction of the text to give careful heed to the words spoken they drift away. Did any of you ever know a man to call his wife and children about him and suggest to them that they all give up prayer; that they were too busy to take the time for family prayer; that the breakfast would get cold if they paused to say thank you to the kind Father who gave it all? Do you know a man who wrote in his diary the statement that he proposed to ignore God? On the other hand, do you know a man who is drifting away from prayer? How are the family altars broken

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down! Oh, Father, forgive us for drifting away from them, and help us to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.

Men have given up the Sabbath in Plainfield. They are not within the reach of my voice; but the same influences that caused them to drift away are about you. The liability to drift is the most powerful and subtle of all dangers. Those who lie in their hammocks when they ought to be in the house of God may not know that they lie to the Holy Spirit; but they must know that they are drifting away. Those who care more for clubs than for Christ, who trample the Lord of the Sabbath under their wheels—they may not know that they are crucifying the Saviour afresh, but they ought to know that they are drifting away. Those who unconsciously are putting money and position above and before character do not know that they are putting the Lord to an open shame; but they can not be so blind as not to see that they are drifting away. O, neglect thou enemy of the souls of men!—thou recruiting officer of hell! wouldst thou deceive us also?

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"The tide is flowing out, and we upon its bosom borne,
are drifting to the sea.

Drifting toward the portals of the boundless sea, past
all mortal vision, to eternity.

Drifting nearer, nearer to the sea of eternity.

"The tide is flowing out, and some upon its bosom
borne, are drifting to the sea.

Drifting out to darkness, far from love and light;
where the storms are raging into endless night.

Drifting nearer, nearer to the sea of eternity."

The sad fact of drifting away is possible, because men are not always anchored to Christ when they are brought to him. The most perplexing and heart-breaking thing that comes to an evangelist or pastor is not the knowledge that men deliberately reject the call of God to repentance, but it is that those who have come with joy to obey the words of God may be found drifting constantly farther and farther away from them.

Whenever anyone accepts Christ he ought to be made to understand that the "new birth" is the beginning of a new life of glorious struggle, and that "saving grace" must be supplemented by "keeping grace," if we may make a distinction where there is really none. That everyone who would be kept from drifting away must be securely tied up to Jesus Christ. He must be

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built upon a firm foundation: must be near the source of power. How is this to be done? Next to the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit will be the influence of Christian service. He who is doing the work of Christ will not drift. Constant, aggressive service for Christ and the church will be an anchor to the soul.

It would be folly for us to ignore the fact that we are living in the midst of powerful adverse influences with treacherous undercurrents that tend to carry us away from the Saviour. The commercial and pleasure-loving age in which we live is a very vortex of conflicting currents, whose general trend, it seems, is away from the Bible, the Sabbath and all the truth of God. But I am not preaching to the world, nor yet to the Seventh-day Baptist denomination. I am but saying to a company of my Christian friends that in view of all these things we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things spoken, lest by chance any of us drift away. We are not a drifting people—no. This is not a drifting church. From my heart I thank God to-day for the splendid “staying qualities” which you exhibit. But the importance of being on our guard is very manifest. Some are drifting, and

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that unconsciously, which is all the more dangerous. How important that we look often to the compass, examine the charts and communicate with the captain. The movement of the solar system through space is detected and its direction indicated by observations on distant stars taken from year to year, and from generation to generation. So it may be that our religious drift is so gradual that we cannot perceive it at all, but this fact only renders it the more dangerous. Safety lies only in having life within, for dead fish will not go up stream, and hidden rocks and shoals, very Niagaras, await the careless, drifting Christian.

The direction of this dangerous drift it is not difficult to know. It is away from spiritual life, from prayer, from the Bible, from the Sabbath, from the church, from a clean, unselfish life.

One of the most dangerous undercurrents that we have to contend with is that subtle influence that we call worldliness. Do not misunderstand me to accuse any of being worldly. I only wish to call attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus did not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil. We are in the world. All about

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us are the soul-destroying influences of evil. The struggle is not to get out of the world, but it is to keep the world out of us. Practically, the only way to keep the world out of us is by having our hearts and minds full of that which is good.

Would it not be well to take observations from time to time to see just where we are and what the direction of our course is? A sailor would not spend his whole time taking observations, and yet he would not go on long without finding his bearings. Just what direction and distance are we to-day, as individuals I mean, from the Bible, from the Sabbath, from prayer, from the church, from Jesus Christ, and from the Eternal Father? Compare your position and distance with that of one year ago, or ten years ago. Have we drawn nearer or have we drifted away? If we should find that our position is somewhat changed, remember that the "Rock of Ages" has not drifted; that the light-house and the eternal headlands have not floated across the harbor, but that we may have become turned about when we removed our eyes from them. Take, for example, a single land-mark in Christian experience. Take the one to which

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reference has already been made—your attitude toward prayer. Let us hope that prayer is ever becoming more real and necessary to us. But is it so? It is not necessary to exert oneself to break the habit of prayer, for the stubborn, independent human heart will easily drift away. The exhortation of the apostle in the text is of great practical importance to us. We cannot be too watchful, for to say that we are drifting away from the teaching of these words of God is to say that we are drifting away from God and from the salvation that he offers to all.

A drifting soul is not only in great danger itself, but it imperils the life of many another voyager on the sea of life. I am told that a sailor is in especial fear of a derelict. A derelict is a deserted, old, dead hulk of some ship that has been abandoned at sea, and which is still floating about. Rocks and shoals may be mapped and indicated, so that the careful pilot may avoid them, but the master of a ship can never tell when one of these aimless wanderers will cross his path. The danger from a derelict is that its light has gone out, its signals are silenced, and that it changes its location with every change of wind and current. A drifting Chris-

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tian, without light or purpose, may cause the loss of many another. May God save every one of us from this unspeakable calamity, for Jesus says of him who would cause one of the little ones who believe in him to stumble, that it were better for that one that a mill-stone were tied to his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. It may be one in your family—wife or husband, or parent or child—or it may be a friend or neighbor, or perchance an entire stranger. The oceans that separate the continents have but few of these dreaded derelicts; but the sea of life is dotted with drifting Christians, whose light has gone out and who go on, borne this way and that by every changing wind and current without anchor or compass or purpose. They are drifting, possibly unconsciously, farther from the cause of right and duty—farther from heaven and eternal rest—nearer and nearer to the rapids where return will no longer be possible, and to the whirl-pool where loss will be irreparable and eternal.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.”

What is the meaning of the words, “The

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things that were heard?" The connection of the text leaves no doubt about that. The Hebrew Christians were in danger of drifting away from the simple gospel of salvation, which was spoken through the Lord and confirmed unto them by those who heard him. That from which these early Christians were in danger of drifting corresponds exactly to the Bible in its relation to us. It is the Word of God which we have heard. We are not beyond the danger of drifting from the Bible. We live in a drifting age; the church is getting away from the Bible, and we shall not escape the blighting influence. The very air we breathe is thick with disregard for the law of God. Seventh-day Baptist doctrine and the Bible stand or fall together. The Bible will stand. The word of God faileth not. The Seventh-day Baptist denomination may or may not abide because, as individuals, we may or may not heed the injunctions of this text. The opportunities that are before this generation of Seventh-day Baptists are wonderful,—wonderful opportunities to develop the highest and best types of Christian manhood and womanhood; opportunities to bring forth and exhibit the keenest perception

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and the most stalwart courage. The times demand men and women who are conscientious and courageous. Young men of Plainfield, especially, will you drift—backward and downward—or will you come quickly to the help of the Lord against the mighty?

No one of us would entertain for a moment the thought of deliberately turning our backs upon the Law of God or the Book of his Word. We would not crucify again the Lord from heaven or trample upon the Sabbath of Jehovah,—sooner than that let my right hand forget her cunning, and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; and yet it is so easy to let go and drift away. The remedy for all this is to keep close to Jesus. Are any drifting in the Sabbath-school, or the Christian Endeavor Society, or the prayer-meetings, or in the home religious life? Where are the soul-winners? Will you go to-day or to-morrow, it may be, to those who are not here to-day, and taking them by the hand in love, repeat this text to them?

God is love and light and strength; and his eternal truth will triumph. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess his name. There is no occasion for discouragement; but

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there is great need of watchfulness. Victory will certainly come to every faithful disciple. Then keep the lights and the fires burning. The Bible is our chart, heaven is our haven, hope is our anchor; Jesus the pilot and governor of our ship. Is not the reward worth all the struggle? Is not the victory well worth all the conflict? "Let us not be asleep as many, but awake to righteousness that we sin not." "Wherefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them."

"The tide is flowing out, but hark! upon its bosom
borne, a voice floats o'er the sea.
'Tis the Saviour calling to his sheltering breast;
Come to me, ye weary; I will give you rest.
Drifting nearer, nearer to the sea of eternity."

VI

" And sanctified it."—Gen. 2 : 3

IN speaking on what is called "the Sabbath question" to-day, no effort will be made to exhaust the subject or to dwell on points of theology, philosophy or history, except as they may be suggested in an effort to give a brief, concise, simple, orderly statement of what the Bible teaches about the seventh day. Our attention was called to this text by observing the fact that the word Sabbath does not occur in the book of Genesis. "And sanctified it." The word "sanctified," as used in this connection, needs but little explanation. It means to set apart to a sacred purpose. It is said of something that Jehovah hallowed it—that is, he made it holy; and that he sanctified it—that is, he devoted it to a sacred purpose. He made it to be different from other things of its kind. Different because of the holy, sacred purpose for which it was to be used. What was it that God sanctified? The word Sabbath is not used in this connection. He sanctified "it." This then is the subject to-

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day. Sanctified It. What it was, what it has been, what it is, and what it is to be.

"It" is the seventh day. Gen. 2: 3, "And God blessed the *seventh day* and sanctified it." Before there were races and nations, before there were tribes and families, before there were bond and free, Jew or Gentile, Jehovah set apart the seventh day for his own glory and for man's good. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are the history of primitive man. At the very beginning of human history God gave to the whole race, as a priceless heritage, the Sabbath and the home. The statement of the text is vital and fundamental when it says of the seventh day of the week that Jehovah sanctified *it*. It was made for man. It was made when time began. When you study the Sabbath question begin at the beginning.

The sixteenth chapter of Exodus is of value in this discussion for two reasons. It identifies beyond question the Sabbath which the Hebrew nation observed with the seventh day of the week which God sanctified. God said, in speaking of the manna, verse 26, "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." The fact

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that the manna was withheld on a certain day of each week for forty years answers any question about the possibility of a loss of reckoning. He sanctified it. "It" was the seventh day of the week. This chapter also shows distinctly that the Sabbath was known to the people some time before the giving of the commandments on Mt. Sinai.

The point of the chapter seems to be that Jehovah was making a test of the obedience of his people, and when some went out to gather on the Sabbath He said to Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments?" The passage ends, so far as the Sabbath is concerned, with this statement, v. 30, "So the people rested on the *seventh day*."

A little later, when the law was delivered to Moses, written by the finger of God on tables of stone, the Sabbath law had been placed in the very center of the moral code, and introduced by the word "remember," which implies a knowledge of the facts. In the commandment itself the language of Almighty God also identifies the Sabbath of the Exodus with the seventh day of the creation week. The Sabbath day is the seventh day.

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It is held by some that the Sabbath law of Ex. 20 was national and local, rather than that it *is* universal and perpetual. Let us see. All agree that the other nine laws of the decalogue are universal in their application, and express the moral duty of man to God and of man to man. From the very heart of the perfect law the Sabbath is torn out and cast away. Now Jesus says that the Sabbath was made for man. We have seen that it was given at the very beginning of human history, as was the home. The Sabbath and the home were twin sisters at the beginning; they found a place together in the great moral law which Jehovah committed to a chosen nation; they now very largely hold the destiny of the church of Jesus Christ. Every argument to prove that one is "Jewish" will be equally valid against the other, and in fact against all these laws.

An unprejudiced observer could hardly escape the conclusion that the desperate effort made to prove that the Sabbath alone of all the ten commandments is "Jewish," and so not "binding" upon us, would never have been thought of had not the church, in an evil hour, been induced to yield its loyalty to God in this

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matter. Not many years ago the Christians of America quite generally held that the Sabbath law was moral and binding, but that it had been transferred to Sunday. Consistency and common reason has compelled most men to accept the position, taught in the text, that "it" of Gen. 2 and Ex. 20 was "the seventh day." That the institution can not be divorced from the day. It has thus come about that the church has been compelled to change its practice or its teaching. It is unspeakably sad to observe that men are more and more choosing the alternative of holding that the Sabbath law is not a universal moral law. This position is weakening to the whole law, and is fast destroying confidence in the Bible as the fundamental rule in moral and religious matters. God only knows what the end will be. Men may say what they choose about the Sabbath, they may do what they please on the Sabbath, but the Word of God says of the seventh day, "he sanctified it." The Sabbath has often been desecrated, but it has never been "unsanctified." The Sabbath was given to the race in Eden. For forty years, in the days of Moses, Jehovah placed upon the seventh day the seal of his identification. This was the day that

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Jesus rescued from the formalism and burdens of the scribes, and which he honored.

In this connection the subject is sometimes raised about the time of the beginning of the Sabbath. Fortunately this is a question where we are not left to any doubtful inference. Lev. 23: 32, "From even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." Neh. 13: 19, "And it came to pass that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath I commanded that the gates should be shut." These and other passages show that the days as God made them, and as his people observed them, were from sunset to sunset. This has always been the Jewish order. We read in Mark 1: 32 that the following incident occurred at the close of a certain Sabbath: "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased. . ." The Divine order was "evening and morning." It was a day thus beginning and thus ending that Jehovah sanctified, that Nehemiah enforced, and that Jesus rescued.

The Sabbath is referred to many times in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, but in the centuries following the time of Moses we hear little of it. The day that God sancti-

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fied is referred to in Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, and especially by the great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Ezekiel charges the people with many sins, and classes Sabbath-breaking with idolatry and adultery (Ez. 20: 16; 22: 8 and others).

The prophet Jeremiah warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem that disregard of Jehovah's Sabbath was bringing destruction upon that city. Read Jeremiah 17: 19-27 and imagine the picture of the man of God standing in the gate of the sacred city pleading with the people to keep the Sabbath, promising blessings to the obedient and giving warnings to the disobedient. The great prophet Isaiah is equally clear on this subject. Chapter 56: 2 classes Sabbath-keeping with other moral precepts: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." Hear also verse 6: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant." The 58th chapter is especially rich

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in promise of blessing to those who call the Sabbath a delight, holy and honorable.

Again, in the great revival under Nehemiah, the Sabbath was prominent. This author refers to the Sabbath more than a dozen times, and from him we learn that disregard for the Sabbath was considered the occasion of God's having withdrawn his protection from Jerusalem in the past; that the Sabbath began at twilight; and that keeping the Sabbath was enforced upon farmers and merchants, and upon Jews and Gentiles alike.

The days of the exile were times of sifting and refining for Israel; and out of this period of change came new conceptions of the Sabbath, but of its *identity* with the seventh day of the creation story, and of its *authority* as the seventh day of Mount Sinai, there is no question. Thus the Sabbath came to the times of the New Testament.

Let us now look for a moment at the attitude which our Lord and Saviour took toward the seventh day of the week which his Father had sanctified for man's good. In studying his example and teaching we are met with the fact that Jesus was many times in sharp controversy

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with the Jews over the Sabbath. It was very largely the question of his Sabbath-keeping that drove his enemies to seek to take his life. Over and over again he is accused of breaking the Sabbath. But in every case the difference was over some act of mercy. There were chances enough for the Saviour to say that the Sabbath law was not moral or binding, but he did nothing of the kind. Never by word or act did he attack or belittle the Sabbath. He tore away the rubbish that had gathered about the Sabbath, and that was making it an intolerable burden. His defense of himself was always to show that deeds of mercy or necessity would not be wrong on any day. It was his custom to attend the synagogue service on the Sabbath (Lu. 4: 16). There is absolutely nothing in his conduct or in his teaching to indicate that he did not consider the Sabbath law as a part of the law, one jot or tittle of which should not pass away, till all has been fulfilled (Matt. 5: 18). In speaking of divorce and adultery, Jesus says, Lu. 16: 17, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." What law is here meant but the moral law of the ten commandments. If any

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should think that reference in these passages is to a part of the law, let us listen to the great teacher again, Matt. 5: 19, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Further light is thrown on Christ's attitude to the law in the advice given to the multitude and to his disciples in Matt. 23:2, 3, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you, observe and do, but do ye not after their works: for they say, and do not." Every dispute between Christ and the Jews on the Sabbath question was in regard to the manner in which the holy day should be observed. Language could not be plainer than that in which Our Lord commends the keeping of the whole law. Not only so but the Saviour distinctly assumes that his disciples would be keeping the Sabbath for years after his death, for, in speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, which did not occur till the year seventy, he says, Mt. 24: 20, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the

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Sabbath day." There is no doubt but that which Jesus here implies about the church was true, that the early church did observe the Sabbath. The Son of Man was indeed "Lord of the Sabbath" but he did not change the time which Jehovah had hallowed and he did not make the seventh day unsanctified. His example and his teaching agree that he purified, honored, exalted and spiritualized the Sabbath. What else would be expected of Him who was in the beginning with God, and without whom was not anything made that was made (Jo. 1: 3), "The Sabbath was made for man;" "and sanctified it."

Looking on now into the book of Acts we find that the apostles continued to worship on the Sabbath. Here is an example, Acts 13: 42 and 44, "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath and the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Another passage should also be given to show that such gatherings were not merely for the convenience of having a synagogue, Acts 16: 13, "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by the river side, where prayer was wont to

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be made: and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither."

In all the writings of all the apostles the Sabbath is not once distinctly referred to. The only place where the term occurs is a doubtful passage, Col. 2: 16, where "Sabbath days" are classed with meats, drinks, holidays and new moons as shadows of things to come, and about which men ought not to judge one another. Now the weekly Sabbath is not a shadow of something to come, as were the Sabbaths of the ceremonial law. It is not a type of Christ, but a memorial of creation. It had come down from the beginning of history and found a place in the heart of the great moral law before the ceremonial law was given. If Paul meant to say that the Sabbath should not be kept, such a statement is quite out of accord with his general teaching about the law. This passage is best understood as having reference to Jewish ceremonies which were figures of Christ. Paul says, Rom. 7: 12, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good." And again, Rom. 3: 31, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law."

The apostle James has this to say about the

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law, Jas. 2: 10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Do you suppose that James did not teach that the Sabbath should be kept?

With the claims of the first day of the week to any special regard this subject has nothing to do. Public opinion is changing so rapidly in this matter that it no longer needs attention. Some of us are very sorry to see all conscientious regard for Sunday being swept rapidly away. The Christian world is face to face with the question of "the Sabbath or no Sabbath." The hope of the church is in the truth of the text. The seventh day is God's representative in time. He has set it apart for man's good and his own glory. The future of the Christian church is indeed dark if it is to be Sabbathless. The spiritual welfare of the individual, and family, and church and nation, require a special time for rest and religion. Thoughtful people no longer regard Sunday as sacred time. There is in it nothing to which the church can appeal with authority. The only wonder now is that men ever believed and taught that Sunday was sacred time, taught in the New Testament and having authority from God and Mount Sinai.

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But what is the church to do? Are we to become Sabbathless? Thank God, No. What will be in eternity we do not know, but while time lasts the Sabbath will last. While there are days there will be "the seventh day." It has been set apart as the representative of God. It was made for man. Jehovah sanctified it. Jesus honored and kept it. The church has never wholly given it up. The unchristian world will never keep a Sabbath. How could they? Sabbath-keeping is a profession of religion. There is nothing that would so help the church to restrain the evil and strengthen the good as a return to the Sabbath which Jehovah sanctified and which Jesus honored. If the Bible is true the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath. If the seventh day is the Sabbath then God will yet honor it. Let us believe God. Let us labor and pray earnestly and without ceasing, that the *truth*, and *beauty* and *value* of the Sabbath may be recognized by every disciple of our Lord. "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it."

VII

“Evil communications corrupt good manners.”—
1 Cor. 15 : 33

THIS text, taken from Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, is a quotation from the Greek poet Menander. It is not the only time that Paul quotes from heathen writers. In his sermon on Mars Hill, when he was speaking to the cultured men of Athens, he quoted from Aratus, prefacing the quotation by saying, “As certain also of your own poets have said.” Again, in writing to Titus, he said of the Cretians that some of their own writers had said that they were also liars,—where the reference is supposed to be to Epimedes, another famous Greek, whose home was in Crete. “Evil communications corrupt good manners” sounds almost like a proverb; and those who know Menander's style would expect just this from him. He is said to be famous for the elegance with which he threw into the form of a single sentence the maxims of that practical wisdom in the affairs of common life which formed so important a feature of what was called “the New Comedy.”

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In the example which the text furnishes, each word is emphatic, "evil communications corrupt good manners," and the quotation is introduced by the warning, "be not deceived," and is followed by the ringing exhortation, "awake to righteousness and sin not."

The particular play from which the quotation is made is said to be *Thais*; and Paul used it exactly as we would use a quotation from *Hamlet*. Paul does not refer to the origin of this statement, or say that it is a quotation, for the same reason that I might say, "God helps those who help themselves," without pausing to remind you that that particular form of the expression of truth is supposed to have originated with one Benjamin Franklin.

Let us now look briefly at the meaning of the text, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The Revised Version translates the word "communications" as "company," which makes the text say that bad company corrupts good manners. Most of the old English versions use expressions like "evil words," or "malicious speaking," which give the same idea as communication. The original meaning of the word, and its use in this connection by the

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apostle, seem to indicate a slightly broader meaning, including something back of the words. It might be called "association,"—evil association. Many evil associations are dangerous only, or largely, by reason of words of untruth. Some words are bad in themselves, while others are bad because they are the conveyors of evil. The Corinthians were in danger of the corruption of untruth as well as of vice. The term, "good manners," has also a meaning broader and deeper than *surface culture*. The words mean moral goodness, hence good character. This then is the thought, both of Menander and of Paul, bad associations destroy good character. Before this congregation there is no need of argument to prove the truth of this statement and I shall only illustrate and apply the truth.

The first thing to notice is not a pleasant thought, and that is, that the natural tendency of man is to do wrong. Without a thought of theology or philosophy we must all admit that the prevailing current is away from righteousness and unselfishness. It is easier to drift than to go against the tide and current. The Bible also says that the natural man is at enmity against God, that the heart of man is deceitful above all

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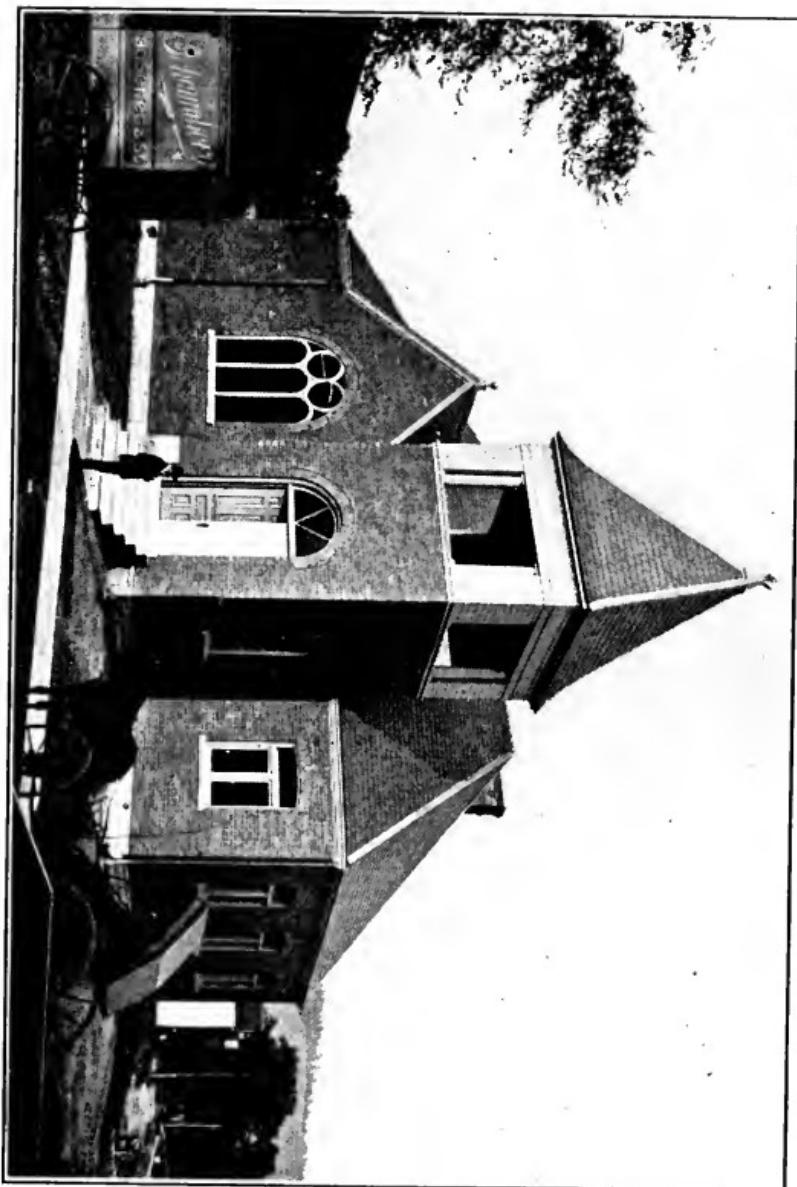
things and desperately wicked; that the road to death is broad and easy, and that the path to life is narrow and difficult. History and reason and conscience agree with Scripture that it is easy to do wrong and that it is hard to do right. That righteousness is attained only through struggle. The current is downward, and only live fish go up the stream. Is it not true in the experience of each of you that the only way that Spiritual life and power can be maintained is by constant prayer and watchfulness and struggle?

Not long ago a bright young business man said to me, "It would be so easy to let go of the church and then let go of God." The expression he used was that the "lines of the least resistance" were all in the other direction. It matters little whether you are in business or professional life, in the school-room, office, shop, field or home, you are sure to be swept away unless you co-operate with the power of God in a manful resistance; for the lines of the least resistance will lead you into utter loss. Most diseases are catching but good health is not contagious. The good health of one may greatly benefit the health of another, but it will not be by transmitting health, but by helping resist disease. So it

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is with good associations; they help mightily in the struggle toward righteousness, but not in the same way or degree that evil associations drag down and destroy that which is good and true and pure. A lady bought a parrot from a sailor, and was shocked to find that it swore like a pirate. What was to be done? A neighbor had a parrot that used good language always. The story goes on to say that the woman in trouble went and borrowed the good bird and placed the two parrots near each other, in the hope of seeing a speedy reformation in her pet. I do not need to tell you the result—the result as shown in the rapidly acquired vocabulary of the second bird. I have often thought of this when I have heard of young women who have married men to reform them. By the way—did you ever know of a young man who married a bad woman to reform her? Possibly you have.

A devout, spiritual, church working woman once went to her pastor with a choking in her throat and with tears in her eyes, and told him of an effort she had been making to have a certain group of young people attend a meeting of the church, and of her disappointment at finding that they had gone to the theater, at the invita-



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tion of another young woman of much less strength of character. She closed her statement with something like this, "To think that after all that I have done for them that they would break faith with me and go with her." The pastor urged the discouraged woman not to give up her efforts, not to yield one inch of the battle-line; but to remember that almost anyone could influence people to be selfish, and pleasure-seeking and all that, but that it takes more wisdom and patience and power to persuade men and women to be unselfish and true to God. Sometimes we wonder at the influence for evil that a young man has over others. The secret is largely in the fact that the lines of the least resistance are in that direction. Remember this, young people, that it takes a strong character and a mighty effort in these days to go against the current of indifference and carry with you a group of your companions. Let us try to be leaders rather than followers; but if we must needs follow, then let us follow the true and good. Shame on a man or woman who will blindly follow the lead of any! Twice shame on one who will, with eyes wide open, weakly follow the lead of evil. "Be not deceived, evil communications

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corrupt good manners; awake to righteousness and sin not."

Do not misunderstand me. I am not condemning necessary evil associations, nor benevolent evil associations. I am but recalling the warning of the apostle—to be not deceived—the natural and almost necessary result of evil associations is the corrupting of good morals. Jesus associated with sinners, and defended himself on the ground that they were lost sheep, and lost coins, and lost sons. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. If we have the Christ spirit in full measure we are in no danger, and cannot be in bad company too much; but our motives are mixed motives, and our knowledge is partial knowledge, and all our judgments are judgments of prejudice. All our associations with evil have in them the possibilities of great good and the possibilities of great loss. Our Saviour did not pray that his disciples should be removed from a world of temptation and trial and sin, but that they should be kept from the evil.

In building a house, a man does not hope to place it beyond the reach of rain and wind and cold, it would be of little value in such a place.

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Neither does one hope to exclude and keep out all the cold. If it is cold without, the walls will not long keep it from becoming cold within unless there is heat there. When on some winter morning you find your house cold, it is not so much because you have neglected to keep the cold out as it is because you have neglected to have heat within. It is so with our hearts. It will be impossible to keep sin out unless we have within the constant warming presence of God's love. With evil associations all about us like the cold air of winter, we must be on our guard to have God in our hearts and so to keep corruption out. Let us be careful about what we call necessary evil associations. Let us try to avoid positions in business and in society where we will be in danger of moral corruption. Do not permit yourself to be compelled to listen to that which is untrue, unkind, or unclean. When an evil association is really necessary it loses its chief danger; but if it is courted or tolerated it is sure to become a corrupting influence. Let us illustrate the thought by a single example.

Take for instance the problems that confront a spiritual-minded Seventh-day Baptist medical student. Things will have to change a good

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deal before such a young man or woman will not feel the force of this text. But what is the student to do? Do? Do the best he can. What that is, I shall not undertake to say. This much is clear, that the necessary will have little power of evil; but the minute we welcome the easy or embrace the wrong, half hoping that they are necessary, then we corrupt good morals. The same could be said of any one of us, in whatever position we occupy. Bad associations should not be confounded with ordinary temptations to evil that are not only necessary, but strengthening to the right. A boy, to develop moral strength, must be tested. Call it tempted if you please. Trust him with money. Trust him with confidence. Trust him to tell the truth. He will be tempted to take or tell or conceal, but thus he will grow stronger. It is thus that God deals with his children. But suppose another case. Suppose you find that a boy or girl is teaching your little child things unnamable; suppose the teacher finds it penciled on the litter of the school-room, you do not think of development through struggle, but you think of death by poison. Dr. George Northrup, so long the honored head of the theological school at Mor-

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gan Park, says that his most difficult Christian duty has been to forgive those who poisoned his boyish mind with vile, wicked stories, evil communications that corrupt good manners. Parents and teachers should give no uncertain sound on this subject. Boys and girls should be taught that unclean words are as wicked in the sight of God as untruthful ones.

It is the source of great satisfaction to feel that there is little call for me to urge that you set good examples in this matter, and yet there are frequent opportunities where, without giving offense, we may rebuke this folly and sin. President Grant was once in a company of men where improper language was being used and when he made his disapproval known, the guilty man said, "Why, there are no ladies present." Grant replied, "I know there are no ladies present, but there are gentlemen present." At this point it ought to be said that "evil communications" will include very many things which to us are not so repulsive, but which may be equally wrong. Paul classes with these "outbreaking sins" the conditions of heart that find expression in fault-finding, in backbiting, in complainings, in gossiping. These conditions and others rep-

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resent a bad heart, and are evil communications that corrupt good morals.

There is another way in which evil communications approach us where we are not apt to be so well on our guard. That is in the matter of our reading; for the books we read are like companions to us in their influence, either for good or for evil. This is true, both of books of facts and of fiction. In reading the lives of great men, especially of good men, we reap something of the advantage of associating with them. So it is that if we make the Bible our companion, we come to live with Isaiah and Paul and Jesus. In the field of fiction there is the possibility of the same advantage. On the other hand we find ourselves keeping bad company in books. Too often story writers and play writers care only to make a hit, and they write to please the vulgar. Look over the news-stands and bill boards and much of the daily and Sunday papers. I am not a candidate for a position on any board of theatrical censors; I make no claim to being a literary critic, but I know enough to know that our children or we ourselves may be in very bad company when we are alone, alone with some paper or book. The young man or woman who

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reads trashy, sensational novels is keeping bad company, and his or her morals are being corrupted by evil communications; be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. We sow the wind and we reap the whirlwind.

When President Davis was pastor at Alfred he called attention in a sermon to what the Alfred people read, to the class of newspapers that were sold on the streets, to the class of cheap books that were passed from hand to hand. He declared that it was a disgrace and a shame that in Alfred, with her opportunities and her history, that it should be so common for books and papers to be read that were not only of little or no value, but that were positively damaging. Much the same conditions were found to exist at Nile. The oil men read when alone on the lease. I have seen them hide their books when I came in sight. It reminds one of an expression with which Elder L. D. Seager once began an address at a Sabbath-school picnic in Ohio. He said, "If you are going to raise a buzzard you will have to feed it on carrion." But some will say, people must read, and young people will have associates. True enough. But there can be but little ex-

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cuse for keeping bad company and no excuse for reading bad books. This rich soil will produce something, golden grain or noxious weeds. The best way to keep out the weeds is to sow and cultivate the grain. Weeds are to be destroyed, but killing weeds will not necessarily insure a harvest of grain. With free schools, free lectures, free libraries, and with good books and papers so cheap that they are next to free, there is little excuse for the mind to be choked with nettles and deadly nightshades, unless it be that there remains something of the old buzzard nature and appetite. Parents, teachers and all others, may we not only set a good example, but may we not strive to the utmost of ability and opportunity to help others, especially the young, to guard the approach to their minds against these evil communications.

We make a good deal in these days of proper ventilation in our homes and schools and churches; and this is right. We analyze our drinking water, and have our pure-food laws; this also is good. But there are things vastly more important than pure air and water, they are pure minds and hearts. I remember calling at a farm house in New York state. Not find-

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ing anyone at the house I went out to the barn. As I approached the door I heard the hired-man teaching the farmer's son a vile song. There were in the village clean young men, Seventh-day Baptists, who were anxious to work, but they were not quite so strong and competent help as this coarse fellow. Children must go to school; and men must go to business. Boys and girls must play—must play in the streets, I suppose. Men and women must mingle with the world in society and business and politics. But followers of Christ must not confuse trifles with essentials. A flood of corrupting influences sweeps all about us. The abounding love of God in our hearts, and eternal vigilance are the price of liberty and purity.

In the church at Corinth there had risen false teachers that were threatening the very foundations of the Gospel. These false teachers were in the apostle's mind when he referred to corrupt communications. Untruth about the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus was corrupting to good morals, and men were saying that there will be no resurrection, "let us eat; drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Men and women are largely made by their environ-

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ments. It is also true that we largely make our own environment. Was it Tennyson who said, "I am a part of all that I have ever met"? If this be true of us who live in these busy times, what a curious composite is possible? But there is a sense in which it is certainly true that each one of us is made up of something from all that we have ever met. Something from every book we have read, from every conversation to which we have ever listened, something from everything we have even seen or heard.

We would not belittle the fact that men are independent moral beings, who freely choose their daily walk and destiny. Neither would we pass over lightly the truth that God is able to kill the love and power of sin in men. We are not left to struggle on alone, but we are left to struggle, to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." We must be strong. We must not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. When we meet evil it must not be to be influenced to evil, but rather to overcome evil. Exactly the same is true of error. If our environments put us in constant communications with error, it must be to overcome error with truth. If our associates are from necessity bad,

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then we must try to influence them for good.

Let us examine carefully the motive and the ground of necessity in evil communications. There may be proper excuses for bad association, but not for bad books or bad language or bad thoughts. They are always corrupting influences. It has been said in excuse of bad thoughts that we can not control our thoughts. This is true only to a limited extent; for an evil thought that is not permitted to stay in the mind will soon stop coming to the threshold. We may not be able to hinder a bad thought from crossing the door-sill of the mind, but we need not offer it a chair; and if Christ is always there, it will not need to be told to go. The strongest influence is the unconscious influence. This is true both of good and bad influence; and of the one exercising it and the one moved by it. One who is always thinking and talking of his influence is not likely to have so very much more than others. If we do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God, our influence will take care of itself. The influences of home and school and society that mold are the unconscious ones.

If we come to hate sin and error and unclean-

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ness with all our strength; and if we love righteousness and truth and holiness, then we will carry with us a clean atmosphere which will be an influence like the very breath of heaven. Then shall we not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee.

Jehovah is our leader and wrong shall not triumph. We are as sure of victory as we are to follow God. "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not."

VIII

" Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."—Psa. 107 : 2a

THANKSGIVING-DAY is our one, national, religious, holiday. Memorial day, Independence day, and the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln are our patriotic holidays. Christmas and New Years-day are common to all Christendom. Christmas, a strange compound of Christian and heathen customs, and New Years-day, the peculiarly personal day, when resolutions are made, and when account of stock is taken.

Thanksgiving-day belongs to our country ; and to the Christians of our country. I have failed to find in the president's proclamation anything about football, or golf, or roast turkey ; but there is something about national prosperity, and our relation to Almighty God. I am quite in sympathy with manly sports, and I am very fond of a good dinner ; but Thanksgiving-day is a religious day ; and the religious and family features must be made prominent or the value of this holiday will be largely lost. The Fourth of July has largely lost the place it once held in

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the hearts of the American people; and Memorial day will suffer the same fate, if we allow the original purpose of the day to be drowned in the flood of commercialism and dissipation.

I am never surprised at the small attendance at church on Thanksgiving morning. It is a religious service in the midst of unusual temptation to be in the fields; and unusual demands to be in the kitchen.

What proportion of the inhabitants of the United States do you suppose will respond to the call of our president, and gather in the churches of this land for Divine worship to-day? It is safe to assume that an unusually large proportion of those who make up this audience are Christians. The text of scripture to which attention is called is from the second verse of the one hundred and seventh psalm: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The idea expressed in this language is not exactly thankfulness or gratitude or appreciation, but rather the expression of appreciation. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." That is, let those whom God hath redeemed give expression to their appreciation. There are many ways of expressing appreciation, but not the least of which is to say so.

Expression of Appreciation

We teach our children to say "thank you," and we follow them up year after year with a "what do you say" and are not satisfied that they act thankful.

A big awkward farmer-boy went away from home and worked for a neighbor. At supper they had warm biscuits and the hungry boy rapidly disposed of a large quantity. Finally the lady of the house asked him how he liked the biscuits. Before he could frame any suitable reply a young lady at the table remarked, that actions spoke louder than words. She was right and yet the actions referred to expressed appreciation of the biscuits and not of the one who had prepared them. If you go home to an unusually good dinner to-day, the fact that you gorge yourself will not be an expression of appreciation to those who have prepared that dinner.

The fear of being guilty of flattery or of being accused of flattery often frightens us into being stingy with the expressions of our appreciation. A proper and valuable part of every man's wages and every woman's wages is the expression of appreciation of good service. At Thanksgiving time we remember to be thankful; and when our

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friends die we give expression to our appreciation of them.

How much brighter and happier the world would be, and how much God would be honored, if in every avenue of our daily walk we would practice more that simple virtue suggested for our religious lives in the text, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

It was a dull busy afternoon in a large country school. As the tired teacher passed down the room a little eight-year-old girl held up her slate for a copy. The teacher took the slate, and for want of another, wrote this sentence, "I know a little fairy." A few minutes afterward he passed that way again and paused to see how the work progressed, and he saw that well down toward the bottom of the slate there was one line that varied from all the rest and it read like this, "I have a good teacher." Almost instantly the words were erased and the scholar is now a teacher, but the light of that line has never gone out. It was the simple childish expression of appreciation.

I do not like to say that God demands of us thanksgiving. Because thanks that come because demanded, are not thanks. I do not like



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to urge thanksgiving as a Christian duty, although it is certainly that. It is our duty to give thanks to God alway, but thanksgiving should be spontaneous. It is a necessary accompaniment of a free salvation. It springs naturally from our relation to God as dependent creatures; and as children of a loving Heavenly Father.

The text is not so much an exhortation to thankfulness, as it is to the expression of thanksgiving. The one hundred and seventh psalm is one of the psalms of liturgy, and was doubtless used in public worship. The words were probably chanted responsively. What more beautiful or suggestive words than the opening verses of this magnificent psalm for the worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem or in this age and place and day, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." And then comes back the response, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

The terms redeemed and Redeemer are only understood in the light of the ancient custom where men and women were bought and sold and redeemed with money. The people of Israel were represented as having been sold into

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captivity, and Jehovah is said to have bought them back. As saith the prophet, "Ye have sold yourselves for naught and ye shall be redeemed without money." So it is that the individual is represented as being sold into sin and that Jesus Christ paid the price of his redemption. This is figurative language, but the underlying fact is the center and foundation of the Christian religion. That the Son of God has redeemed a race of individual sinners. In such a Gospel of good tidings the elements of thanksgiving and praise must have a prominent place. If it is a fact that we have been, in the Gospel, redeemed from all that is threatening and bad, to all that is beautiful and good, then every one who comprehends the fact can not be otherwise than thankful, and will be sure to express thanksgiving in words and in life.

The author of our national hymn, "America," has given us a hymn of redemption:

Redeemed from death, redeemed from sin;
Redeemed from ills without, within;
Redeemed? What new light gilds the skies!
What glories on the soul arise!

Glory to Him, whose love unknown,
Touched man's abyss from heaven's high throne;

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Like some new star is radiance beamed,
A new song rose—Redeemed! redeemed!

As ocean's billows swell and break,
The mighty tide of praise shall wake;
Thy love, Lord, like the unfathom'd sea,
Shall waft a world redeemed to Thee.

Redeemed! creation joyful brings
Its tribute to the King of kings;
Redeemed! earth's million voices raise
One sounding anthem to his praise.

If that hymn could but be realized in the Christian church, there would be no occasion to repeat the exhortation of the Psalmist, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

A missionary in the city of Shanghai, China, known to many of this congregation, once saved the life of a man who was left to die of small-pox. During a scourge of that disease, that is so feared by the Chinese, it became customary to place the dead unburied in a house outside the city wall. Hearing groans coming from this place, our friend discovered that in their haste to be rid of the sick some one had placed a man while yet living among the dead. This brave woman hastened to bring food and drink, and went with it into this house of death, hold-

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ing her breath meanwhile. This she did each day for two weeks. At last the poor man thus saved to life, crept out into the light again. You do not need to be told where he went or what he did. You do not doubt that he made every effort to express his appreciation. He threw himself at the woman's feet and asked to be her slave. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he was induced to go away.

I, too, have been among the dead. About me all was darkness and despair. Before me a shameful, hopeless, endless death. But Jesus came and redeemed me from sin and death. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings, and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praises unto our God."

If you have been taken from the horrible pit, and your feet placed on the solid rock, why do we not hear your song of deliverance. Shame on the man, redeemed of the Lord, who will not say so. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people."

Expression of Appreciation

The reason that we are not more thankful is usually because we are not more thoughtful. The words thank and thought are from the same root, and there is a real connection between them. Any one who is really thoughtful is sure to be thankful. Why is it that our hearts swell with thanksgiving and gratitude to God to-day? It is because our minds are drawn and held to the subject of thanksgiving. We are more thankful because more thoughtful.

But how are the redeemed of the Lord to express their appreciation of their redemption? They will say so. The lives that they live will say so. The lives of the redeemed ought to be eloquent with thanksgiving and praise of the Redeemer. If He has bought us, then we are his; and all that we have and are, are his. It ought not to be different with us than it was with the Apostle Paul who could say of God, "The Lord, whose I am and whom I serve." But what the text has more special reference to is the expression of appreciation in words. Let us lighten the burdens of life by expressions of appreciation one for another; let us honor God by public thanksgiving for all his benefits to us, chief of which is the great fact of our redemption.

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Let the men and women who have known the joys of the life of the redeemed not shrink from the duty of telling others; but rather hasten to the privilege of giving testimony to the love and saving grace of Him to whom thanksgiving is ever due.

Another way in which the redeemed may heed the text's exhortation is by a prayerful life. The normal life of a child of God is a life of prayer. I have not said public prayer. I have not said family prayer. But I have said prayer, and that prayer, whatever form it may take, whether confession, praise or petition will be sure to be an expression of appreciation.

I shall not insult your intelligence nor delay your dinners by an effort to catalogue the evidences of the abounding prosperity that is enjoyed by our nation and by our city. God has also been very good to us as churches, families and individuals. Seldom, if ever, have the fields brought forth more abundantly. Seldom if ever has the business of the country been more prosperous. Corn is being burned for fuel; and a great railroad system seriously embarrassed by a freight blockade.

The only unpleasant feature of all this in con-

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nexion with the national thanksgiving-day is that it often seems as if there was little real connection between supply and demand in the matter of our thanksgiving. It sometimes happens that the less we have the more thankful we are. Why are we especially thankful this year that we have coal in our cellars? Is it not because we have been so recently face to face with this burning question. I have read of a little girl who, when the family went out to attend the service on thanksgiving morning, shut the cat in a dark closet in order, she said, that it would have something to be thankful for when released at noon.

So it is that as we come out of the closet on the coal question that we think with thankfulness that we are not to suffer for want of fuel this winter. Those are most apt to appreciate good health who have been deprived of it. Those most appreciate food who have known hunger. You will remember having read that in the early days of the history of New England that our Pilgrim Fathers came into such straits for food that for a time they subsisted almost entirely upon clams. It is reported that over a meal of clams their leader fervently return-

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ed thanks to God in this language, "Thou hast given us to suck the abundance of the seas and the treasures hid in the sand."

What child will be most happy on Christmas morning? Probably not the one who has received the most costly gifts. Who of us is most thankful to-day? He will be most thankful who best understands the relation which he holds to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

It ought not to be necessary, it ought not to be the rule, that we must first be deprived of blessings before we appreciate them. Our nation is at peace, let us appreciate this fact outside the shadows of war.

The graineries and ware-houses of the land are overflowing with the fruit of the field. Shall we not thank God for that unurged by the scourge of want. Our stores and factories are busy beyond measure and the lights never go out in our shops. Let us not wait till the panic comes before we say "thank you" to the one who has given it all. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Let us not wait till sickness comes before we remember to thank God for health. And so with all the many blessings that crowd each other into

Expression of Appreciation

our daily life in home and church and nation. Let us see all the beautiful and good in life, and acknowledge the Giver. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Thanksgiving-day comes at the close of the autumn season because it marks the gathering in of fruits and grain to the agricultural people; and because this fact made it especially appropriate when our people were few and agriculture was our only means of support. We now have great interests in commerce and manufactures, in lumber and in mines; but after all we have not outgrown the farm altogether, and the basis of our prosperity is in the abundance of grass and grain and fruit that the land produces, and Our Father in Heaven has more to do with that abundance than has the administration at Washington. Let us thank God for the beautiful, Christian harvest festival of Thanksgiving. For the pleasant memories of the history of its simple sweet origin. For the influence that it had had in perpetuating our fathers' ideals of Christian homes. Let us defend Thanksgiving-day as a Christian festival against the encroachments of frivolity and greed and dissipation. Our homes and our churches and our nation need the

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day, and Almighty God will be honored by our one joyous, united song of thanksgiving, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace."

IX

“ Other men labored ; and ye are entered into their labors.”—John 4 : 38

THREE are among Seventh-day Baptists those who believe it is wrong to celebrate Christmas. This feeling, which is rapidly growing less, was once quite general in our churches. In order to hold the interest of the children and young people through the trying holiday season, at Milton Junction, Wisconsin, they used frequently to have an entertainment, very like a Christmas entertainment, but which was held on December 23.

December 23 is “Founder’s Day” among Seventh-day Baptists. Now it is not at all unlikely that there are those present who never heard of Founder’s Day among Seventh-day Baptists, and who could not connect next Tuesday, December 23, with any sort of anniversary except that it is two days before Christmas.

The text this morning is John 4: 38, “Other men labored ; and ye are entered into their labors.” A theme suggested by the passing of

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the 231st anniversary of the organization of the first Seventh-day Baptist Church in America.

It is not altogether unlikely that the treatment of this subject may be liable to the criticism of not being a sermon; but yet this text is not merely pretext, as you will see before we have done. The application of this text, to this people, at this time, is very pertinent and vital. "Other men labored; and ye are entered into their labors."

So far as I know the first Seventh-day Baptist was John the Baptist. All agree that he kept the Sabbath; and few deny but what his baptism was by immersion. Our Saviour was also a Sabbath-keeping Baptist. His immediate followers were also Seventh-day Baptists. But our subject is not to trace the doctrine of our "Apostolic Succession;" but only of our history in America. I can not pass without a single reference to the interesting field of study in the history of the Sabbath-keeping Baptists of England. To those who have given it even a superficial study, there is an inspiration in the names: Trask, James, Stennett, Banfield, Chamberlain, Savage, Cornthwait, and a long line of other brave and gifted men who, with Black and Jones

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of more recent years, have carried on the unequal fight in England. There are many lessons for us in their brave loyalty and scholarly zeal, and also in the mistakes which it is now clearly evident that they made.

In treating this subject it will be necessary to assume a certain amount of knowledge and a certain amount of ignorance on your part. Seventh-day Baptist churches in America have, for convenience in our treatment, four separate and distinct origins.

I. The Rhode Island branch, with its beginning at Newport in 1664.

II. The second branch of our family began at Newtown, a few miles west of Philadelphia, Pa., in the last decade of the seventeenth century.

III. The third branch had its origin at Piscataway, N. J., when, in the year 1700, James Dunham began keeping the Sabbath.

IV. The fourth division is made up of a large number of small churches that have been organized through the efforts of the American Sabbath Tract Society; these are mostly in the South and Southwest. In each of these four divisions is ample material for a volume, and I must hasten. I. The Newport, R. I., branch:

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Stephen Mumford, a Sabbath-keeper, came to Newport in 1664. After five or six years, six others were keeping the Sabbath. At first they had no thought of leaving the church with which they were connected, but as misunderstandings arose they found it best to ask to be dismissed, and thereupon they organized a church, the first Seventh-day Baptist church in America. This was on December 23, 1671. In the first group we find the names of William Hiscox, Samuel Hubbard, Rodger Baxter, Tacy Hubbard, Rachel Langworthy. William Hiscox was ordained the first pastor. He held that position until 1704. He was followed by Elder William Gibson, a Seventh-day Baptist from London, Eng. Other pastors have been: Joseph Crandall, John Maxson, Wm. Bliss, Henry Burdick and Lucius Crandall. The tracing of these names across New England, New York and Wisconsin to the prairies beyond is not only very instructive, but highly interesting.

For more than a third of a century Newport was the only church, but in 1708 those Sabbath-keepers who lived on the main-land were organized into the Westerly church. This church, now called First Hopkinton, included all Sab-

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bath-keepers on the main-land of Rhode Island for the next 127 years. At that time its membership was about 1,000. Soon after this it was broken up into nine churches in Rhode Island and Connecticut.

It is a matter of interest that, in 1780, there were Seventh-day Baptist churches at Bristol and at Burlington, Conn. In 1794, Elder Elisha Gillette organized a Seventh-day Baptist church at Oyster Pond, on Long Island. But the movement was now rapidly westward. In 1780 members of the church at Westerly organized a church at Berlin, N. Y. Here we meet the names, Satterlee, Greene, Saunders. Here the late L. C. Rogers began his work. In 1797 the same forces are found at Brookfield, N. Y., those who organized the church coming from Rhode Island by way of Bristol and Petersburg to attend a "yearly meeting." At Brookfield we find the Clarkes, Burdicks, Utters, Baileys, Whitfords. Later came DeRuyter, with DeRuyter Institute and the Protestant Sentinel. With the Maxsons, the Campbells and the Babcocks, Sabbath Reform, education and mission work were all advanced. At Scott, in 1820, were Hubbards from Newport, with Barbers and Bab-

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cocks. We cannot pause to speak of Adams Centre and all the other churches of what is now the Central Association, for they all had their origin in the same movement.

In 1816 a church was formed at Alfred, Allegany Co., with Elds. Hull and Babcock as joint pastors. Again we hear the familiar Rhode Island names, Burdick, Clark, Crandall, Greene, Saunders, Stillman, etc. Most of the churches of the Western Association were formed within the next few years.

About 1840 there was another great westward movement to Illinois and Wisconsin. About 1860 Seventh-day Baptists swarmed again and the Minnesota churches were formed, and still later to Nebraska, Kansas, Dakota and still on to Colorado and California. Throughout every stage and in every place of this great movement, our church has received valuable additions by converts to the Sabbath; we have also gained and lost through mixed marriages and other causes, and yet through these two hundred years, and through all the northern churches the predominant influence has been, and is yet, the influence and character of Rhode Island.

I would be glad to pause to call attention to



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the place these people have taken in education, missions, and all forms of reform work. From the founding of Brown University, from the sailing of Carpenter and Wardner, from the days of the anti-slavery agitation, all down the years, the record is such that young Seventh-day Baptists may study the history of their people with satisfaction and with profit.

II.

The second branch of our family I have said had its origin at Newtown, Pa., a few miles west of Philadelphia. In 1691 there was a division among the Quakers of that locality. The dissenters were led by a Scotchman named Keith. Wm. Davis, a Welchman, was one of these. They laid great stress on the Ten Commandments. These people were scattered about at Newtown, Pennypeck, Nottingham and at French Creek. About 1696 there came among this people a Seventh-day Baptist, one Abel Noble, who a few years before had come from England. Many embraced the doctrine of baptism and the Sabbath. Thomas Martyn was their leader. Wm. Davis was also prominent among them. Seventh-day Baptists in Pennsylvania had many trials, bitter persecutions and

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oppositions from without and dissensions within. In 1754 a number of families removed to St. Marks, S. C., where they founded a church on Broad River. Five years later eight families removed from Broad River to Tuckaseeking, Ga., and shortly afterwards two families, Samuel and Richard Bond, settled in the mountains of Virginia at Lost Creek.

Let us return to Wm. Davis. He was born in Wales in 1663, came to America in 1684, joined Keith in 1691, embraced the Sabbath in 1700; he seems to have battled his enemies and quarreled with his friends continually; he was tried for heresy; he was refused membership at Newport in 1706. He removed to Westerly and was admitted to membership in 1710. His son John married a Clarke at Westerly, and the family removed to Shrewsbury, Monmouth County, N. J., where a church was organized. Pastor John Davis was sent to Westerly for ordination in 1746. About thirty years afterwards his cousin, Jacob Davis, was ordained by men sent for that purpose from New Market. Fourteen years later, while Jacob Davis was yet pastor, the church moved bodily, stopping at various places in Pennsylvania, till they settled at Salem, W.

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Va. All the churches in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Georgia, and New Jersey that grew out of the labors of Able Noble are now extinct. They were not therefore failures. From the Bonds of Nottingham came the Bonds of Lost Creek. From Georgia came the Hughes of Jackson Centre, Ohio. From Salem and Lost Creek have come all the churches of West Virginia, Ohio, Welton and Garwin in Iowa, and Long Branch, Neb. We have also many faithful ministers—L. A. Platts, the Davises, the Randolphs and many others.

III.

The history of the third branch of our family is not largely a history of emigration. There are but four churches in this line, but they have always held the ground that they have gained.

In 1700, Edmon Dunham, of the Baptist church of Piscataway, N. J., as he was going to church one Sunday morning, saw one Bonham at work and rebuked him for breaking the Sabbath. I do not know whether Bonham was a Sabbath-keeper, but he challenged Dunham to show that Sunday was the Sabbath, with the result that Dunham began keeping the Sabbath.

Five years later, in 1705, a church of 17 mem-

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bers was organized with Edmon Dunham as pastor. The same year Dunham was sent to Westerly for ordination. Thus you see that both the West Virginia and New Jersey churches have received their ordination from Rhode Island. Edmon Dunham was followed, as pastor, by his son Jonathan. Jonathan Dunham was a man of great strength, spiritual, intellectual and physical. A tanner by trade; he worked a farm all his life; he also traveled and wrote much. For thirty-three years he served the church as pastor, and died during the stirring days of the Revolutionary War. Some of you may need to be told that the Piscataway church is the church at New Market, N. J. It has never been a large church, but it has held its own well. In 1737 members were dismissed to form a church at Cohansey, now Shiloh, Cumberland County. In 1811 this church, in turn, dismissed members to form the Salem, now Marlboro, church. In 1838 the mother church at New Market dismissed fifty-six members who were the charter members of the Plainfield church. These New Jersey churches have always had more or less connection with the other branches of the denomination, and yet in origin and development they are

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distinct. It may be of interest if I mention the names of the pastors of the Piscataway church: Edmon Dunham, Jonathan Dunham, Nathan Rogers, Henry McLafferty, Gideon Wooden, John Watson, W. B. Maxson, W. B. Gillette, H. H. Baker, L. C. Rogers, L. A. Platts, L. E. Livermore, E. P. Saunders, J. G. Burdick, L. E. Livermore, F. E. Peterson, Martin Sindall and L. E. Livermore.

Before I take up the last historical division I wish to say that the old geographical distinctions among us are rapidly passing away. Denominational schools, a common publishing house, cheap postage and transportation are among the influences to bring this about. Our young people now meet in our schools and Conferences. They go from one corner of the denomination to the other in business and matrimonial ventures. And yet historically the divisions that have been given are very clear.

IV.

About thirty years ago, through the work of the Tract Society, there was in Southern Illinois a notable Sabbath revival (if I may use that term). Within a few years there sprung up six churches within twenty miles of each other. In

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1872 there were ninety-seven members in churches at Villa Ridge, Pleasant Hill, Enon, Stone Fort, Harrisburg and at Raleigh. All but two of these churches are now extinct, but much good has come to us by the acquisition of such men as Kelly, Johnson, Lewis and Threlkeld. The same influence a little later brought about the organization of churches at Billings and Tyrone in Missouri, Fouke and DeWitt in Arkansas, Rose Hill and Bulcher in Texas, Shepherdsville, Ky.; Fayetteville, N. C.; and Attalla, Ala. There are now ten or fifteen of these churches with more than that number of living ministers. These churches are all small, the people are poor and discouraged, but they are faithful little lamps of Sabbath truth; they are of us, although differing from us so widely in origin and development.

We have now passed rapidly over the outline history of the Seventh-day Baptists in America; quite possibly too rapidly for any profit. It is a history of loyalty, independence, zeal and heroic courage, to which we may point our children with pride. The outline given to-day is entirely wanting in beauty and power because it is only a skeleton outline. Clothe it with the personal-

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ity of our great men and women, color it with the story of their struggles, breath into it the freedom and faith of our fathers, and teach it to our children. But this was to be a sermon, and lest you may have forgotten the text, I will repeat it: "Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors." This text, taken from its connection, is often misunderstood to say that in entering into the labors of other men we are to enjoy the results of labor without the toil of labor; but this is very far from the meaning. Our Saviour had called the attention of his disciples to the fact that the fields were already white for the harvest. He said that they were sent to harvest that on which they had not bestowed labor. Now harvesting is harder work than seeding. It may not be any more important, but it is a good deal hotter. The wider the fields the prophets had sown, the greater the fields the apostles must gather. It is exactly so in our denominational life, other men have labored—but the more our fathers have sown, the more our responsibility to harvest. In the past generation our people have not gathered much, but they have sown abundantly. Our fathers labored well, often better than they knew; we are

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entered into their labor. The harvest is here—it is already suffering. Old arguments and theories have passed away. Sunday as a Sabbath is gone. If the harvest is not gathered, whose fault will it be? Who can make the excuse that he is idle in the market-place because he has not been hired?

X

"I go, sir ; and went not."—Matt. 21 : 30c

I USED to think that this second son changed his mind something as his brother did, but I am inclined to believe now that the fellow lied. When his father said "Go," the easiest way out of what might otherwise have been an embarrassing situation was to say, "O yes, I'll go, certainly I'll go." At any rate he had no fixed purpose to go, and he did not go.

The speaker has taught school a good deal in his time, and he never had a boy or girl say, "I wont," to him; but he has had very many say, "I go, sir," when that was not the last of it, or the least of it.

In looking at this very suggestive little parable we must be on our guard against the thought that Jesus commended the first son who said, "I will not," but who afterwards repented and went. It does not lessen sin to be defiant in it. Neither does our Saviour say that the dishonest and vile and rebellious shall ever enter the Kingdom of God. What he does say is that, regardless of

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the past, men may come by repentance and faith to the service of the Lord and to salvation.

Without doubt the key to the first interpretation of the text is in the words of Jesus that immediately follow where he says, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Not that bad men and women are to be saved in their sins; but rather saved from their sins. The second son, the one spoken of in the text, like the eldest son in the parable of the prodigal, was the Jewish church.

But this little story, so short and so sharp, has in it a world of meaning for this day; when God is still saying, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," and when there are those who are still saying, "I go, sir," but who do not always go.

Is this not true of those who accept all the fundamental facts and doctrines of Christianity, and who have not given their hearts and wills and lives to God? That is, to those who are not Christians. You believe in God and in his Son, Our Lord. But you will not trust him, nor pray to him, nor acknowledge him before the world, nor lead others to him. Jesus lived as

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your example and he died as your sacrifice. God loves you. His voice calls you. You hear that call and many times you have said, "I go, sir." Again your father says, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Why not go? Why not work? Why not work to-day? Why not into his vineyard?

Again there are those who are Christians but who have chosen not to acknowledge it to the world. We are not supposed to know where the line is drawn between you and the class of whom we have just spoken. Some, we feel sure, are the children of God. But are you not saying, "I go," and partly pausing there. We thank God for the pure life you live, but why not go work to-day in His vineyard? Why not acknowledge Him by word as well as by life? Why not come by confession and baptism into the church? Why not work to bring others to a saving knowledge of Christ? Would not this be the exchange of a doubtful, uncertain, discouraging position for one of splendid service and example?

Another class who are clearly in danger of the sin suggested in the text, is that large class of professors who have apparently lost all inter-

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est in aggressive Christianity. I do not agree with those who insist that such people were never converted, or that they have lost their Christianity. I hope we were all born again and that God has not withdrawn his holy spirit from us, but of this I am sure, that a majority of all church-members are saying to God, "I go, sir," when they do not go. The command was not, "Son, go stand around in my vineyard," neither, "Go sit in the shade by the gate of the vineyard." Is it not true that more than half the members of the average church are not active and aggressive Christians? Take for example any church of, say one hundred members. Are there fifty whose voices are ever heard in prayer, fifty who attend the business meetings of the church or even the covenant meetings; are there fifty of the one hundred who could be said to lift financially, or fifty who read *The Recorder*, are there half a hundred who do personal work to bring sinners to Christ, who are active and aggressive Christians? We would not belittle the importance of a good life, it can not well be overestimated. We are thankful that the other fifty are clean good people and that they are generally in their places at church on the Sabbath, but how long,

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think you, would the Seventh-day Baptist denomination survive, or Christianity last, if we depended merely on a good life? They would die together to-morrow.

In a town in Western New York, a fire company was practicing for a race at the county tournament. A man whose place it was to run behind the hose cart and push was accustomed to boast of how he crowded the cart till the rope was slack. One day in a practice race he lost his hold of the cart and with a clear field he was unable to catch up with the rest of the company. The advance of the kingdom of Christ seems quite slow sometimes, and yet if some of us should lose our hold I doubt very much if we ever caught up. This man had been pulling back in the race rather than pushing. Are we pushing or are we dragging? What active, aggressive work are we doing for the Master that we profess to serve. It is of comparatively little importance what answer we give to each other when asked why we are not members of the local church, and why we are not actively engaged in the work of Christ's kingdom, but it is of supreme importance how we treat the voice of God as it tenderly, yet clearly, calls us to personal

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service. "And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not."

Again I think that most Seventh-day Baptists are liable to the charge of having failed to obey, who believe and teach that the Sabbath is of real and vital importance, and yet who do not make an effort to publish that truth to the world. We are on very difficult ground here. When shall I talk of the Sabbath and when shall I keep still about the Sabbath? How far shall I mix with other denominations, and when shall I stand alone as a Sabbath-keeper. Shall I admit that it makes little difference what day one observes if only he can manage to keep his conscience clear? Shall I say that the Sabbath is of great importance and act as if it were of little importance? Is it wrong for Seventh-day Baptists to work on the Sabbath and right for other people to do the same thing? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say."

But the text will have special application to those who profess the Sabbath doctrine but who do not rightly keep the Sabbath. The greatest drawback to Sabbath-reform in a Sabbath-keeping community is quite generally the fact that

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so many of those who keep Sabbath are satisfied to keep it as their First-day friends keep Sunday. We will never win the world to the kind of a Sabbath that Sunday is. I am glad that we are not as Puritanic as we used to be, and I am glad that we are getting more spiritual conceptions of Sabbath-keeping, but one who says that the Sabbath is a holy day and who treats it as a holiday is certainly saying to his Father "I go, sir," when he is either deceiving or self-deceived.

Think of the burden that all these things have placed on the heart of the man who has been placed at the head of our Sabbath-reform work. The other night, when Dr. Richards told of the pastor's dream, I thought of the editor of the *Sabbath Recorder*. He told of a pastor, who, in his dream, thought of his church as a great stage coach that was being drawn up a long hill. The pastor thought of himself as tugging at a long rope in front of the coach. He was surrounded by the elders, trustees, deacons and Sabbath-school teachers, together with all the rank and file of the church. The load seemed light and good progress was being made; but little by little the weight seemed to increase.

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With blistered hands and aching back the leader tugged at the rope, but in spite of all that he could do the coach came to a complete stand-still. Turning about for a consultation he was surprised to find that the whole crowd was stealing a ride.

Now the *Recorder's* editor is not standing alone in his struggle. There are faithful ones at his side; but the fact is that the great majority of the denomination are stealing a ride. The hill is steep and the summit is far ahead. Dr. Lewis expects to die in the harness; but when that time comes I hope we will not all be asleep in the coach or playing marbles by the roadside. O friends, let us wake up, and climb down, and put our shoulders to the wheel or our hands to the rope.

This illustration was not intended to apply to the church of Plainfield. It would not be true or just if so applied; but if any wish to carry the thought a little in that direction, I hope you will remove from the picture the pastor as leader and place the rope in the hands of the great head of the church. Remember how he toiled up Calvary bearing upon his shoulders the heavy cross; and upon his heart the heavier load of

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sin; and how for us he suffered and bled and died. Jesus does not want any of us to ride up this steep hill. Think of the honor and the privilege of working with the Saviour in the church. The church is represented under the beautiful figure of the bride of Christ. Oh how he loves the church! How he loves you, and with what interest he must watch to see what response you each make when our Father says, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard."

Again I think the text may have an application to the plans laid and the pledges made in the heat of enthusiasm, at General Conference or New Year's day. Not that we should promise less, but that we should do more. This suggestion will apply to all lines of work, but will have special reference to our financial obligations. We, the people, insist that the Missionary and Tract Societies enlarge their work, holding all the fields occupied and continually entering new ones. We profess to believe that all we have is but given to us by God to hold in trust. We are but stewards of his, we say, to whom belongs all the silver and gold and the cattle on a thousand hills. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell

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therein. In all this we say, "I go, sir." Let us recall a single example: At the Conference held at Alfred in 1896 an effort was made to increase the paid circulation of the *Sabbath Recorder* to a point where the publication would be self-supporting. This would require the addition of 800 names. This number was divided proportionally among the churches and in a very few minutes pledges were received from most of the churches that their share would be secured, so that we saw the light. That was before I had learned to analyze Conference enthusiasm. It was not wrong to make those pledges. It was right. It was not wrong for the son spoken of in the text to say to his father, "I go, sir." But he should have gone. The result to the *Recorder* subscription list was the temporary addition of 66 names, one in twelve of the required 800. What we lack is not so much money as interest and consecration, for a tithe of the incomes of Seventh-day Baptists would probably amount to \$200,000 annually.

It would take a brave man to suggest that the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor would furnish a subject for an application of this text. That the right arm of the church is

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paralyzed. The central and distinguishing idea of that splendid organization is the pledge. All honor to the pledge. It is not a promise of an iota too much. It is not wrong to make such a pledge, but—

What is true of the pledge is true of the covenant of the church, copies of which, together with the articles of faith, are upon the table to-day. Great leaders and large gifts of money are very important; but the church of Christ is most in need of that spirit of consecration that will bring the great mass of people into the Morning Watch and the Tenth Legion. Why can not Seventh-day Baptists have some of the same power that other organizations have where there is certainly less of truth than we possess.

When Jesus applied this parable to two classes of people of his time, he did not, by any means, imply that all men must be included in one of these. There are two other classes to which men may belong. There are those who say, "I will not" and who do not repent, but who defy their Father to the very end. May God grant that none of us may be in this class. Then again there are those who say, "I go, sir," and who obey their Father's call, going to the vineyard

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with glad hearts to serve as best they can. The important thing is that having said, "I go, sir," that we do not fall under the condemnation that came to the man spoken of in the text.

There is a proverb that says, "There is a time for the flute and a time for the trumpet." I sometimes fear that your pastor is open to the just criticism of too often sounding the trumpet, but it is love that constrains me till I cannot forbear this call, as I plead with you not to make less New Year's resolutions, but to keep them better; not to talk less about the Sabbath, but to keep it better; not to pledge less money, but to pay more; not to give up the Endeavor pledge and your place on some important committee, but to heed the exhortation of the Apostle James, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Not to profess less, but to be more. The sure way for us as individuals, and as a church and denomination to succeed gloriously and quickly is to do all that we promise to do, and to be all that we profess to be.

XI

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved."—Psa. 121 : 3a

THE 121st Psalm is one of a number of short Psalms that are called "Psalms of degrees." Many of us have wondered as we have seen this title written above each of the fifteen Psalms beginning with the 120th, what the term meant, "A Psalm of degrees." Now it is not positively known what the meaning is, but the explanation usually given seems very reasonable and satisfactory. A song of degrees, or more literally, a song of ascent, is a song of going up. These songs of ascent were the songs that the pilgrims sang as they went up to the great annual gatherings at Jerusalem. As they gathered from all parts of the land, and ascended by easy stages the mountains that were round about Jerusalem, they sang the songs of Zion. The 122d is a song of ascent, a song of degrees, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem . . ." What more appropriate song for a lot of happy religious pilgrims to be singing. These songs are all short, as

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would be expected, averaging but seven verses each, and were probably chanted responsively by the different groups of pilgrims. Each has its theme which is followed quite carefully, but there is little that could be called development. The 120th is all sadness, "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." The next is full of confidence, "The Lord is thy keeper." The third is overflowing with gladness, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." The next is of humble trust, etc.

The Psalm from which the text has been chosen and announced, the 121st, is a literary gem that it would be difficult to match, and is overflowing at every point with the poet's glad confidence in Jehovah as his keeper.

Listen again. It may be from the plains of Jericho, where a band of Galilean pilgrims are going into camp for the night. The sun is still lingering on the western hills, the hills that are round about Jerusalem, whither the tribes go up. As the shadows are deepening in the valley and lengthening across the plain, the thoughts of the pilgrim turn to the Lord who is his keeper. "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence

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cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade on thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore."

Let us now look a little closer into the text, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." These words were, of course, figurative. But the meaning underlying the figure is perfectly clear. In reading the Bible you have not failed to observe that the feet are held in much higher honor than is the case in our times. The statement of Paul that we should have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace is evidently directly suggested by the passage of Isaiah, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." Good tidings of peace is the gospel of peace, and in both cases is associated with the feet.

Not suffering the foot to be moved is but another way of saying that the person will not be

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moved; which in turn says that one will be shielded from danger. The central idea of the whole Psalm is "the Lord our keeper," and the particular shade of thought made prominent in this verse is the idea of protection from enemies who might drive us about. Israel was to be given protection and ability to take a position and hold it. Zion was not to slip, nor falter, nor wander, nor retreat, nor fall, but rather to stand. This does not mean that she was not to go forward—for the best kind of standing is usually a going forward. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, did not mean perpetual inactivity for Israel, and it does not mean that for us. It means progress under the most favorable conditions.

We are living in trying days, not indeed days of persecution nor days of war, but nevertheless in days when men's souls are being tried.

The commercial spirit is everywhere, the spirit of doubt is everywhere. This is preeminently true in the great cities, but village life has been touched by the same poison of worldliness, and the home life on the farm is in danger. The question has been seriously raised whether a man can be a Christian and at the same time a

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successful business man in New York City. I am not now speaking of Sabbath-keeping, but can a man meet un-Christian competition in any ordinary business in that city, and not compromise his Christianity? About the professions there would probably not be any serious question, but all will agree that whether it be in business, in school, society, professional life or wherever we are placed, that to maintain a pure Christian life will mean a struggle on our part and Divine assistance continually, for the current is all the other way. We do not have to struggle to love and to seek for money and praise and pleasure. It is easy to doubt and to be disloyal; the right way is narrow and difficult, the wrong way is broad and easy. As we are jostled about by the careless throng and boldly tempted by the Devil, let us thank God for this splendid text of unfailing promise, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." Jehovah will not deceive his people; if we hold our Father's hand, we shall never fall.

Our attention is often called to the fact that we are not holding our own young people. We are told that the way to hold our own is to set them to work to save others to the truth, but the

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fact is continually borne back on some of us that the first duty is to keep within the fold those who are born in our homes. We must strengthen our stakes, as well as lengthen our cords. A generation ago we could lose three or four from a family, and yet hold our own; but it is not so now. Seventh-day Baptist families are not smaller than the families of other people, and our young men and women are not less conscientious than those of other denominations; but I am hinting at some of the facts and conditions that enter into the problem that confronts us as we look out into the new country, and with sad faces confess that many of our young people are not held in the churches. I shall not question our duty to evangelize the world, or disseminate Sabbath truth at home, but our first duty is to stand, and having done all to stand, to stand fast. Our people must all be inspired with more confidence, and that confidence must be grounded in the ability and willingness of Almighty God to keep our feet from falling. The new conditions under which we are living will make our people more and more lone Sabbath-keepers. Many of our teachers and doctors are already so. The pressure that will be brought to bear on

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them is likely to increase. Why, even now, the current running away from the law of God is suggestive of Niagara, and the influence of disregard for Sunday is a very gale in our faces; but as we plant our feet more firmly and brace ourselves for the struggle, think what an encouraging, hopeful, inspiring text this is for the faithful Seventh-day Baptist, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved."

The new century comes to us not only with wonderful opportunities and tremendous duties, but it comes with social and religious conditions so involved that it becomes absolutely necessary that our people shall have, not only the best education, but also the moral and religious qualities to stand alone; the staying qualities, the very first element of which is a reliance in the keeping qualities of the God who promises that he will not permit thy foot to be moved.

A young man or woman goes away to school. It may be to a medical school; the chances are that the spiritual atmosphere is below zero and the question of Sabbath-keeping a blizzard to be faced. It may be a young woman has married a man who does not observe the Sabbath. I need not tell you that the religious future of that

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family is uncertain. A young man has started out in business; he is to face all the problems of doing as Jesus would do in business. Or it may be one who has passed the meridian of life, and has gone to have a home away from Sabbath privileges. Do not tell these, and others with like problems, to do the best they can under the circumstances; but tell them that if they take the right stand, Almighty God will never suffer their feet to be moved. Don't tell a man to close his shop at sundown Friday afternoon, if it is not to injure his business. Tell him to obey God. Don't tell a wife to compromise the Sabbath to win her husband. Tell her that her Father in Heaven knows her trial, and has promised that he will keep her from falling, and will not permit her to be tempted beyond what she is able to bear. We want more men and women in New York City, but we want you to send us the right kind. Don't send us those who say they will *try* to keep the Sabbath; but rather send those who say they will do so. There is a vast difference between one who plans to win what the world calls success, if it can be done without a compromise of conscience, and one who plans not to compromise conscience unless it should in-

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terfere with the world's idea of success. Our God is strong and he will keep his word: "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."

I have had occasion to watch the experience of many young men and women in college and university life away from the influences of home, and those who have kept the Sabbath with ease and grace and at the same time have kept the respect and confidence of their fellows are those who are known, from the beginning, as Seventh-day Baptists. They did not begin with any sort of compromise.

If we are in the right, as we feel sure we are, and if God has promised us victory, then let us not be frightened by the fear of being thought contrary and narrow and bigoted. It is certainly wrong to be contrary and narrow and bigoted, and every Seventh-day Baptist should be so reasonable and charitable and truly broad-minded as to free us from reproach from every thoughtful person. But I remember that the right way is narrow and the wrong way is broad. There may possibly be those who stick to the Sabbath to be contrary. But where one makes the mistake of letting self-will take the

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place of reason and conscience, there are ninety-nine who are carried away with a flood of worldliness. Let us not think too much of what men will say about us, but think more of what God knows us to be. If men say we are narrow and bigoted, let us satisfy ourselves that it is not true. But we must not take everybody's standard of narrowness. But to come back to the text, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." Looking for a moment from another standpoint, we naturally ask who it is that makes this general promise, if it is general, and is he able to keep his promise? If this text stood alone in the Scriptures, we would not dare to press it for a sweeping and fundamental promise; but fortunately it is only one of hundreds of its kind, and anyone who believes in the Bible at all must agree that the words apply to us, and that Jehovah is abundantly able to verify their truth in our case.

Something of the same idea, although in the form of personal confidence rather than a promise, is found in the words of Paul, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Hear also the words

"He Will Not Suffer Thy Foot to be Moved" of Jesus, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Go back to your churches and tell any who may have become discouraged that God lives, and that his truth will certainly triumph. Tell them to take their Bibles and seek out the promises of our Father in Heaven. Don't tell them what men said at Conference till you have told them what Almighty God says in his written Word. Tell them that if they reach up the hand in trust to Jesus, that no one shall pluck them out of his hand. Tell them that if they commit their all to the Saviour whom the apostle trusted, that they will be kept till the great day. Tell them that if they find the truth, and take their stand upon it, that he will not suffer them to be moved; that those who trust Jehovah shall not wander, nor stumble, nor falter, nor fall.

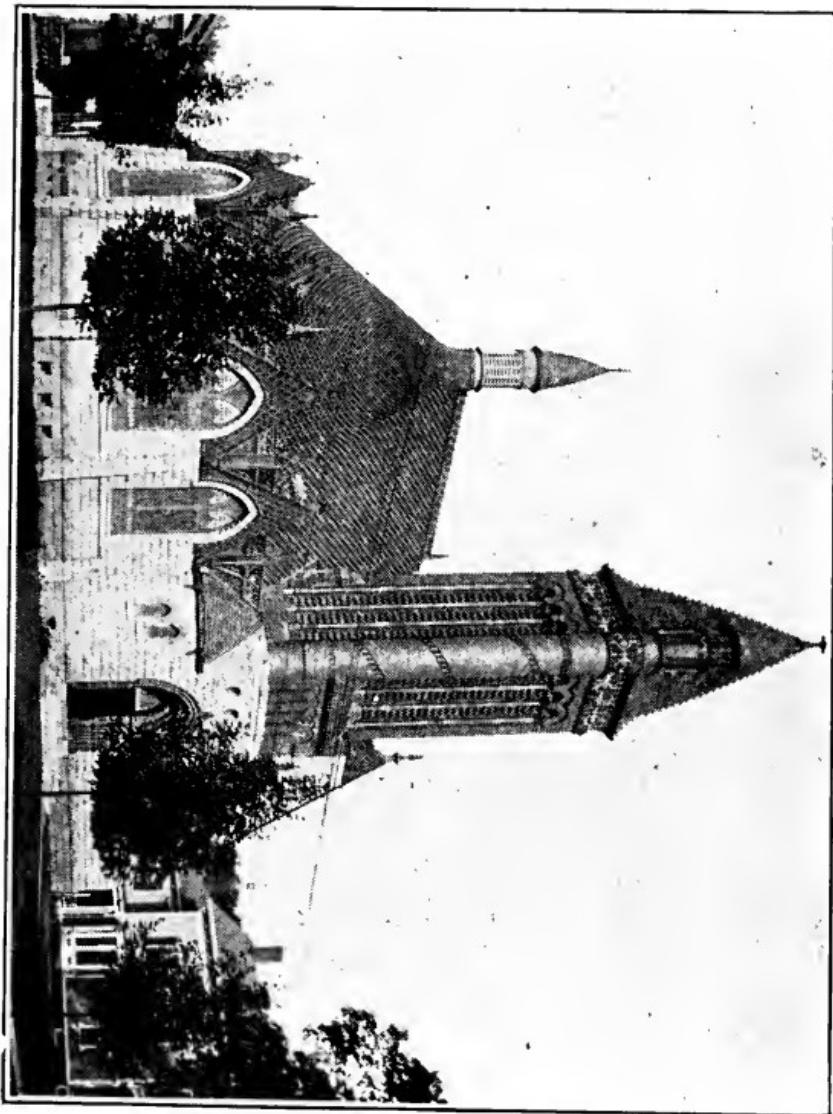
And now what about conditions—are there conditions? Certainly there are conditions. If not directly stated, they are always implied. Possibly the first question to be asked is whether the stand we have taken is right or not. We should know the ground on which we stand to

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be truth. Some men have never taken enough of a stand anywhere so that it would be worth while to keep their feet from being moved. If we are standing on some falsehood or uncertain, changing ground, we cannot hope that the Lord will keep our feet from falling. If the belief in salvation from sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a poorly grounded presumption, then we are on slippery ground. If the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments and of the life of Jesus is not an unchanged moral law, then are our feet almost falling. If, on the other hand, we are building on the truth, then are we safe. Let us search diligently to know the truth, that we may take our stand upon ground where we can confidently expect that he will not suffer our feet to be moved. Notice also that we must take a decided stand ourselves. If a man doesn't exactly know whether or not he is a Christian—he hopes he is, he expects to be, his parents were, he means all right,—that man in his uncertain attitude is not upon ground where he can expect God to maintain him.

It may be that a man is asking that the Lord will keep his feet from falling in the temptation to intemperance, who has never taken any stand

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on that question at all. God will not keep a pure heart in one who deliberately opens his eyes and ears to that which is impure. If any one of us expects the Lord to keep us from the paths of sin, it will be well to consider what stand we have taken toward sin. Neither can a man choose a business or profession where Sabbath-keeping is practically impossible and then expect that the Lord will open the way for him to observe the Sabbath. A man starts out in business hoping in a general way to be able to keep the Sabbath, and get on in the world at the same time. He believes in the Sabbath and would be glad if he could observe it—possibly after a time he can--after he gets a start. This man has not set his feet down at all, and it matters little whether they are moved or not. This is not the way in which Daniel and the other young Hebrew captives answered King Nebuchadnezzar. I can easily imagine a lot of fairly good excuses that these young men might have given to themselves for not being over particular about defilement, but they took a stand, and God honored them in it. So it was that when three of these men were confronted with the question of bowing down to the golden image that the king had set

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up, that there was no uncertain ground taken. To be sure they were alone of all the subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, and they were only captives; but with the enraged king and his armed guards before their eyes, and with the crackle of the furnace in their ears, but with God in their hearts, they confidently answered and said to the king, "Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, oh king. But if not, be it known unto thee, oh king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." The God of these brave men is our God, and if we trust in him, and do our part, there will be with us in every fiery trial the form of the fourth—like unto the Son of God. So it was that afterwards, when King Darius had signed the wicked decree that no one should pray to any god for thirty days, that Daniel was not moved. He chose to face lions rather than to dishonor Jehovah.

"Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.

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"Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God's command,
Honor then the faithful few,
All hail to Daniel's band.

"Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,
Who for God had been a host
By joining Daniel's band.

"Many giants great and tall,
Stalking through the land,
Headlong to the earth would fall
If met by Daniel's band.

"Hold the gospel banner high;
On to victory grand,
Satan and his hosts defy,
And shout for Daniel's band.

"Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known."

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Above all other conditions we are not to forget that while we exert every effort to stand un-

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moved, we are not to trust in our own strength. The Hebrew captives who refused to bow to the golden image on the plains of Dura did not resist in their own strength. To be sure they did exhibit wonderful courage and faith and bravery, but it was all dependent on another and higher power. They said, "Our God, whom we serve, is able." If they had set out to resist the orders of Nebuchadnezzar by intellectual cunning, or by physical prowess, leaving Jehovah out of the account, there would have been quite a different ending to their story; or more likely there would never have been any story at all. It is exactly so in the modern application of the truth and text. Men and women are the strongest when their trust in God to keep them is the strongest. Well said the apostle, "When I am weak then am I strong." That is to say, when he felt most the necessity to trust everything to his Lord, then it was that strength welled up within him.

Seventh-day Baptists have planted their feet on the shores of Asia and in the heart of Africa; they have undertaken to teach the Christian world the neglected truth of Jehovah's Sabbath; problems of education and evangelization stand like rugged mountains across their pathway; it

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would seem that the odds are all against them; but God says, "I will not suffer thy foot to be moved."

Our schools and our Boards are safe, if they are faithful. Our pastorless churches are not without a leader, and our lone Sabbath-keepers are not alone. The world is beautiful and good, and the future is bright for those who obey God. Has he not promised? Tell the children and young people, and let the aged die in hope, for victory is as sure as God is true.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee; turn not thou from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee, Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

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The God of Joshua is the God we serve—yesterday, to-day and forever the same. The Lord who stood by the apostle Paul on the sinking ship in the Mediterranean storm, will stand by Jacob Bakker in the darkness of Africa; the same God who revealed himself to the beloved disciple, banished to Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, will reveal himself to the little flock in Shanghai; the same Jesus who led his disciples through the fields of Galilee and taught them such infinite patience, will go before us and will teach us by his Spirit and by his Word.

When the armies of Cæsar and Pompey stood facing each other on the field of Pharsalia, beyond the Rubicon, and the destiny of nations was in the balance, Pompey gave the order that when Cæsar commanded his legions to charge, that instead of running to meet them on the field, his soldiers should await them in their places. This plan was adopted with the expectation that when the crash came it would find one line of men exhausted by the run, and the other fresh for the fight. This experiment cost Pompey his kingdom, for as the soldiers of Cæsar ran, their courage rose and the momentum which they gained

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was almost resistless, while on the other hand the men standing in their tracks, were soon shaking in their shoes and were ripe for a panic when the blow came. The best way for Seventh-day Baptists to stand is to go forward; and he will not suffer thy foot to be moved.

I doubt if the apostle Paul used such texts as we are considering as he pushed out with the gospel among the heathen; to them he preached salvation from sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but to the struggling converts, and to his own heart such promises of sustaining grace must have been very precious. Think of Paul, the aged and infirm, but the unconquered prisoner of Nero. Scarred with many a scourge and lash, his shoulders are bent with age, his hair is turned to gray and his eyes are dim; already his wrists are calloused with the chains of Rome, but he is not conquered nor in the least discouraged. His mind is clear, his heart is warm, and the star of hope shines bright above. More trials await him, but I hear him saying, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . ." "He will not suffer thy foot to be mov-

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ed." So it has ever been and ever will be. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever."

Let us take courage to-day by remembering this self-evident fact, that if we are right, and if we trust God for help, nothing can harm or hinder us. Amen.

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